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HUMAN RELATIONS *IN* INDUSTRY

by

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PREFACE

Many social scientists believe that an understanding of industry is crucial to an understanding of present day society. What is industry? What way of life does it provide; what patterns of behavior does it foster; and what effects does it have on an individual's other relationships in the society? Until we can answer this kind of question we can not have an adequate understanding of our modern industrial cities which hold so many lives within their bounds.

Technological and economic logics are the concepts most commonly used in analysis of industry, and these are the concepts in which future executives are usually trained. Unhappily training in these logics is often assumed to be sufficient preparation for efficient performance as an executive. Many executives are impatient when it is suggested that they should concern themselves with the study of human relations. They believe that it is enough for them to understand the economics of the business, to be proficient in analyzing the cost picture, to devise better equipment, or to improve sales. Yet actually, the largest portion of the executive's time and effort is spent in dealing with people, in manipulating human relations, in struggling with problems of morale and co-operation. This fact, however, when it is recognized, is often brushed aside in the belief that a position as executive presupposes a knowledge of people and of the human aspects of an organization. When we consider the current frictions and problems in our industrial society, the turnover and absenteeism, low morale, poor co-operation, strikes, and so on, we can not help but question such attitudes. To deal with these problems effectively the executive must recognize that his organization involves problems of human relations as well as economic, technical, and legal problems. Yet one of the greatest blind spots in the formal training of executives, and one of the great-

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est lacks in the available literature, is in this area of human relations.

For many years the writer has been working for a systematic understanding of our social structure, trying to apply this understanding to social problems, and training others in the concepts involved in this understanding. My first experience in the development and application of these concepts was in research on the structure of modern communities, sponsored by the Harvard School of Business Administration. Later I spent five years in charge of employee relations research in connection with the personnel counseling program at the Hawthorne Plant of the Western Electric Company. For the past two years as a member of the Committee on Human Relations in Industry at the University of Chicago, I have been conducting research on the social structure of industry and its relation to the community. All of this experience has provided a close contact with people in industry at all levels. It has also provided an opportunity to see the anxieties and disturbances of people at work, to see the stresses and strains in human relationships in industry and the resulting inefficiencies. And out of this experience has grown the conviction that for all our vaunted technical skills and managerial ability we are still sadly deficient in our understanding of the human problems created by our industrial development.

Time and again we find executives who are seriously concerned about these problems but seem unaware that their own acts and decisions often create these problems among their subordinates. They go blindly along disrupting co-operation, lowering morale, and destroying the organization's ability to function efficiently, even while they try earnestly to correct these things. There has long been a great need for a systematic presentation of the human structure of industry, of the concepts necessary for understanding it and their application to specific problems and situations. So far little has been written which would help either the executive or the student in his basic orientation to the human elements. It is for this purpose that this book has been written; and while it by no means

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covers the whole field of human relations in industry, it is hoped that it may provide a useful orientation for those who must understand and deal with people at work

Although this book is a product of my own experience with social and industrial problems, I have inevitably drawn upon the thinking and experience of the many people and groups with whom I have been associated. Appreciation is expressed to my countless friends in industry from whom I have garnered many ideas and materials, to my students who have labored over many case studies, and to my colleagues on the Committee on Human Relations in Industry. To my wife, Mary Ruby Gardner, I am especially grateful for the time and critical thought she has given in revising and editing the manuscript. I am further indebted to my friends and former colleagues, F. J. Roethlisberger and W. J. Dickson, for the privilege of reprinting at some length from *Management and the Worker*.

May, 1945

—Burleigh B. Gardner

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INTRODUCTION

HUMAN PROBLEMS IN INDUSTRY

In recent years there has been an increasing awareness of the importance of human relations to the effective functioning of business and industrial enterprises. In the past, while our technical knowledge and industrial development have forged ahead, our knowledge of the human side of such development has not kept pace. Professor Philip Cabot of the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration said of this situation:

On the technical side, these large scale operations have been developed with great skill. Inventive genius of a high order has been enlisted in their service, so that many of them are today marvels of mechanical and organizing genius. But, while we have been focussing our attention on the mechanical and technical aspects of industry, we have all but forgotten that industry is carried on by men and women and that "a business organization is a system of cooperative effort."¹

Elaborating on this same theme Professor Elton Mayo also points out:

The human fact that emerges from these or any other studies is that, *while material efficiency has been increasing for two hundred years, the human capacity for working together has in the same period continually diminished.* Of late, the pace of this deterioration seems to have accelerated. This observation is strikingly evident in the international field; it is evident also within any modern society, if the relation between the constituent groups be closely inspected. Discussions in the technical reviews, somewhat grandiloquently entitled "the growth of nationalism," or "collective bargaining as a means of preventing industrial disputes," merely serves to mask the fact that the human capacity for spontaneous cooperation has greatly diminished or, at least, has not kept pace with other developments. . . .

The real importance of these studies is the clear demonstration that collaboration in society cannot be left to chance. Historically and traditionally our predecessors worked for it—and succeeded.

¹Philip Cabot, Foreword to Paul Pigors, L. C. McKenney, and T. O. Armstrong, *Social Problems in Labor Relations*, McGraw-Hill (1939), p. vi.

For at least a century of the most amazing scientific progress we have abandoned the effort—by inadvertence, it is true—and we are now reaping the consequences. Every social group must secure for its individual and group membership:

(a) The satisfaction of economic needs

(b) The maintenance of cooperation organized in social routines. Our methods are all pointed at efficiency; none at the maintenance of cooperation. We do know how to devise efficient methods; we do not know how to ensure spontaneity of cooperation—that is, teamwork.²

These ideas were expressed before our entrance into the present war. Our more recent experiences with problems of wartime industrial organization and production have shown vividly how little we understand the human problems of maintaining a high degree of co-operative effort. The terrific rise of turnover and absenteeism, the frictions between management and unions, the bickering and dissatisfactions at all levels of our industrial organization, all these things point to serious weakness in the structure of our human organization.

One result of this condition has been to direct increasing attention to the whole field of personnel administration. There has been rapid growth of industrial relations or personnel organizations; company after company has introduced pension or employee benefit plans, training programs, or improved employment practices. In fact all the devices of good personnel administration have spread through industry at an unprecedented rate.

If these developments are to prove real and lasting improvements in our industrial scene, if they are to serve a significant function in maintaining effective human organization, it is necessary that an organized, systematic point of view be developed which can be applied to the problems of human relations in industry. In the past, much of the literature in the field has concerned itself with details of various practices, or with summaries of the number of concerns which follow one plan or another, or with similar accounts of what is being

²Elton Mayo, Foreword to F. J. Roethlisberger, *Management and Morale*, Harvard University Press (1941), pp. xvi-xvii, xix-xx

done by others. Rarely has there been an attempt to describe an industrial concern as a functional whole and to consider the place and function of its personnel organization and practices in the total pattern. Furthermore, there has been little effort to compare the basic functions which were expected of any industrial relations activity with the functions that it actually performed in a given organization. Until this is done, too much of our industrial relations work will be a matter of carrying on certain activities because other companies do so, a "keeping up with the Joneses," or because they appeal to the sentiments of some top executive.

Any concern may be considered as a human organization of people in functional relation to one another. Each person has a place in this structure; he has duties and responsibilities, he has certain relationships with others, and his work has a place in the total pattern of work. Thus within the walls of any plant we have a social organization of people participating together in a co-ordinated system of activities. This social system, furthermore, is a well-knit unit in which the function of each has direct and indirect effects upon the others. Thus the way one man does his job may have far-reaching effects upon the work of many others, and the behavior of one may affect the morale and effectiveness of the entire group. In such a system nothing occurs in isolation, and any change may have disturbing and unforeseen effects. Because it is such a closely integrated system of co-operative effort, it is important that everyone concerned with increasing its effectiveness, whether they be executives, personnel people, or supervisors, have an understanding of the nature of such a system and of the problems of maintaining effective co-operation within it.

CHAPTER I

THE FACTORY AS A SOCIAL SYSTEM

A factory is a co-ordinated system of activities directed to the production of goods. It is like a machine of which the component parts are both objects and people, in which each part operates in a very definite and circumscribed way, but in which all parts combine to perform the functions for which the machine was built. It is like the physical structure of a living organism, in which the objects and people may be seen as the cells variously grouped to form different parts, with each having characteristic functions and activities. The composite of all the cells forms the total organism and their combined activities make it a living whole. In such a system each individual fits into a definite place within the total pattern. He has his job and his duties; he has his physical location; he is brought into contact with certain other people and objects; he has his circumscribed round of activities. In such a system, too, the individual is important only in terms of his activities and the way he fits into the activities of others. To put it another way, the whole forms a system of relationships in which each individual fills one position and must function according to the needs of that position.

The gross anatomy of the social structure of a factory forms a rough pyramid with the workers forming a broad base level and the president or plant manager at the top. In between there are a number of layers which make up the supervisory hierarchy and which form a basic status system, with those at each particular level having the same rank in the structure (Fig. 1). This structure is linked together from top to bottom by a series of superior-subordinate or man-boss relations. These linkages running from top to bottom form the lines of authority by which the man at the top directs and controls the entire organization.

Besides the supervisory hierarchy and the lines of authority, there are vertical groupings or lines of cleavage which split

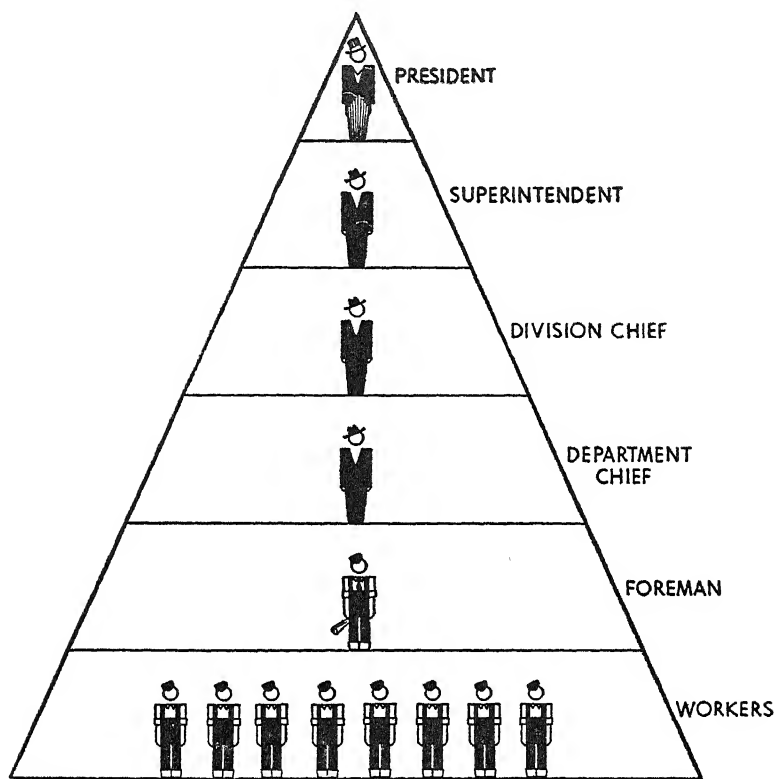


Figure 1. A Typical Supervisory Hierarchy

the organization into units. These are best shown in the typical organization chart on which the various segments are represented with titles which indicate the differences in function of such units as engineering, manufacturing, and accounting (Fig. 2). On such a chart, which is in effect a map of certain aspects of the social structure, we do not see the individuals but only the positions which they occupy and the way their positions fit into the various lines of authority and into the supervisory hierarchy.

As in a physical organism, this whole social structure is linked together by processes of interaction and communication. There are definite channels along which information moves through the structure, the principal ones being the

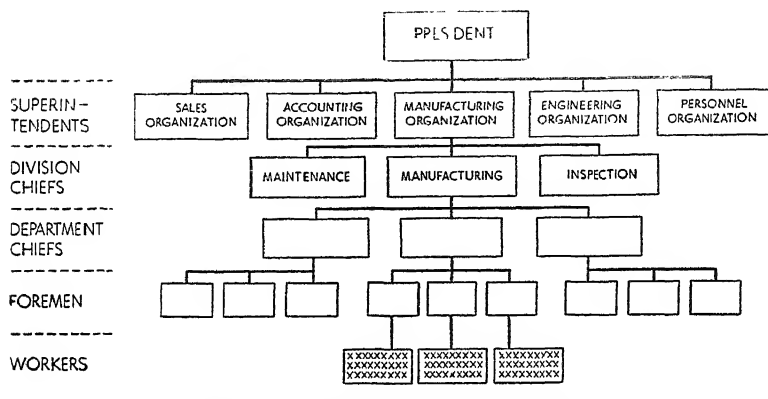


Figure 2 A Typical Organization Chart

lines of authority and the various systems of reports by means of which certain information is collected and communicated upward through the structure. In the organism the nerve pathways lead to the brain; sensory stimuli move from the sensory organs to the brain and return stimuli move outward again. So in the factory, the bulk of information moves upward to the top of the structure, and the orders, questions, and other impulses move back downward. In addition there are a variety of mechanisms by means of which communication is maintained laterally through the system so that all kinds of information spread in all directions. Many of these processes are very irregular and informal, but they work very well. In fact, in most plants the "grapevine" plays an important role in keeping people informed and works faster than the formal channels.

A person's position in this structure determines to a large extent his behavior and his relationships with others and even the way he thinks about his job and the organization. Thus the engineer acts and thinks differently from the accountant, the foreman is different from the worker, and the office worker is different from the shop worker. And in every case the individual must adjust his behavior to his place in the structure; he must adapt himself to the needs of the job rather than adapt the job to himself. Thus the individual is constantly

subordinated to the structure, for otherwise it would be impossible to maintain the highly complex co-ordination of activities essential to the functioning of a modern factory.

This structure and its system of relationships is for the most part stable; it retains its pattern in spite of changes in personnel. People may come into the system, move from position to position in it, and move out again, yet the pattern remains intact. And while details may vary from time to time or from factory to factory, the basic elements are stable and appear in every large plant. This stability does not mean, however, that there is never any change, for there are constant changes in personnel, fluctuations in size, and various other modifications of the structure. In other words, the structure is not static or rigid, but it is stable within certain limits, in that the basic elements, the general patterns of interaction, remain the same.

This social system can be thought of as existing in a state of equilibrium such that it has a tendency to maintain itself intact against external forces. By equilibrium we mean a kind of balance of forces such that, when some change is imposed upon the system, forces are generated which resist the change and which may restore the original balance once the outside pressure is removed. A simple analogy is that of a toy balloon which may be squeezed into different shapes but when released returns to its original shape. A more complicated type of equilibrium is seen in the physical organism which, in case of injury such as a cut, responds with elaborate processes by which bleeding is stopped, infection combatted, and growth stimulated to heal the wound. In a similar way the social system of a factory has its equilibrium, its state of inertia, in which it resists the changes forced upon it, and restores the original state of balance after the pressure is removed.

AN INDUSTRY AS A STATUS SYSTEM

The heart of the social organization of industry is the relationship between the individual and his direct boss. Every person except one within the structure has a boss, and every

boss in turn has his boss, until finally at the top of the heap we find that rare and practically sacred individual, the president, the owner, the big-shot-who-has-no-boss. (Of course, even presidents have their boards of directors, but a director is a different sort from your personal boss who seems to be ever present, asking questions, and "breathing down your neck.") In most companies or factories there is one Big Boss and below him rank after rank of smaller bosses down to the very bottom where we find those unfortunates who have no one to boss, those who are so numerous and so unimportant that their names never appear on the organization's charts—the workers.

The Supervisory Hierarchy

The whole structure forms a neat pyramid with the Big Boss at the top and each rank of lesser bosses increasing in numbers as they decrease in importance, until at the bottom of the supervisory structure there is the largest and perhaps the most misunderstood group, the foremen or first-line supervisors (see Fig. 1). The whole forms a status system with all foremen having a rank superior to the workers, all the next level outranking the foremen, and so on.

Although each department chief outranks every foreman, it does not follow that a foreman will take orders from any department chief or even from any superintendent. (At least in theory they do not, but it is pretty hard to say "no" to a superintendent.) Instead, each person has his own personal boss to whom he looks for orders and instructions, for praise and criticism, for rewards and punishments. This extends on up to the top, so that each person is linked up to the Big Boss through a series of these man-boss relationships. This forms what is known as "the line of authority," or "chain of command" in the army. Since each level has more persons in it than the level above, each boss as a rule has more than one person reporting to him. This gives the fan-shaped pattern so well known on the formal organization charts with a num-

ber of lines of authority merging at each level until finally they all merge into the supreme command of the Big Boss.

Just as the lines of authority converge toward the top of the structure, the lines of interest and attention converge too. In fact, everyone seems to be looking upward with his attention focused upon the people above him and especially upon his boss. His boss is the man who hands out the orders, assigns him to his work, gives him a pat on the back for a good job, and passes on a good word for him to the "higher-ups." And his boss is the man who can give him a dirty job to do, criticize him for doing it poorly, and give him a bad name up the line. His boss is his link with those above him in the structure. Thus the likes and dislikes of the boss, his moods and opinions, his comings and goings, his least comment and gesture, or the way he is distracted by that cute little redhead from the next department, all these are subjects of interest to his subordinates. Each subordinate is concerned over just how his boss feels about him. He wonders if his work is satisfactory, if he makes a good appearance, if his boss thinks he talks too much or not enough, or if he knows just what his boss does expect.

While each boss is thus the center of attention from his subordinates, he in turn is busy watching his own boss and wondering about him. As a result he tends to look upon his subordinates in quite a different way. He rarely worries about their opinions of him; he does not lie awake at night wondering if he acted like a fool in front of them; he does not treasure their words of wisdom or of praise to be retold at the dinner table. He does not even remember that he is the center of their attention, and he is likely to be annoyed with them if they are upset by his indifference or demand a lot of his time.

Thus we have a series of man-boss relationships in which each person is intensely concerned with how his boss judges him and at the same time is busy judging his subordinates. Each is constantly looking at his subordinates, trying to de-

termine how well they are doing their jobs, and how they might do better work, and each is constantly being irritated and disturbed when they fall short of what he thinks they should be doing. At the same time his concept of the job is constantly being mixed up with what his boss will think and what *he* expects, until "doing a job" often becomes a matter of "doing what the boss thinks is good." Often this concern is not merely with what the boss expects in terms of the work itself, but also with what he thinks is "proper" behavior. As a result each level is constantly judging his subordinates not merely in terms of the work accomplished but in terms of "what would my boss think if he saw them?"

The supervisory structure is, then, a status system in which it is accepted as a matter of course that each level has more status and prestige than the ones below it. In fact, the words used in discussing it show this status factor. We speak of superiors and subordinates, of higher and lower levels, of up and down, of above and below, all of which imply differences in rank in such a structure. The problem of status or prestige does not end with this simple supervisory hierarchy, however, but intrudes itself into all sorts of situations and in innumerable guises. In fact, the matters of relative status, of where each person fits in terms of it, of how each compares with others, present some of the most interesting, and to those involved some of the most annoying and painful, problems of people at work. Certainly if no one was ever bothered by the status of himself or others, life would be much simpler for everyone.

Shop-Office Distinctions

In the first place we find the important status distinction between shop and office or white collar jobs. Despite the talk about the "dignity of labor" and the pleasures of working with your hands, there is an almost universal feeling that the office jobs are in some sense "superior" to the shop jobs, and that the person who runs a typewriter or adding machine has

a higher status than the person who runs a drill press. This feeling was well expressed by a girl working on a shop job, who said:

I'd really like to work in the office. Isn't it funny the way office people treat factory people? I don't see any difference between them myself, but the office people think they are so much better than the girls who work in the factory. Lots of them have the same education as the office girls, and we are just as refined as they are. They seem to think that factory girls are loud and rough, but there are just as many girls in the office who drink and smoke and are immoral as the girls in the shop. It just seems that having an office job makes them feel that they're better than we are. I've seen the difference in some people I know. One who came from a farm in Missouri went to school and got an office job. Well, she talks about her office job as much as she can and isn't near as friendly as she used to be. We don't have anything to do with each other any more.

I've noticed it with other girls too. I'll meet them at church and they ask me where I work. I tell them. They ask if I work in factory or office. When I say factory, they say, "Oh," and then ask me if I don't get tired of it, and ask me if it's dirty. Then they take every chance to talk about their office jobs.

My mother feels the same way as these people do. She says that since I've worked in the factory I've gotten more boisterous. I talk in a louder voice, not as refined as I used to be. Well, you don't like to hear those things. You don't like to feel that something's happening to you.

In this interview an important characteristic of the status system was expressed, that is, the fact that the person who occupies the higher status position tends to identify himself with the status of his position until it becomes a part of him which he carries into all his contacts with those of lesser status. Thus the girl who had obtained an office job began to draw apart from her former factory friends, and the factory girl was looked down upon by the office girls whom she met in church. Thus the status of one's position is not something which is shed when he leaves his job; it is carried with him into all kinds of situations.

This interview also shows the general feeling of superiority which the higher status group has toward the lower. Not only is their work felt to be of a higher order of importance or value, but they are superior beings. The office group tends to look down upon the shop workers as inferiors in mind, manner, and morals. The shop workers have grimy hands and poor taste, they say; they are loud-mouthed and use coarse language; they are less educated or at least less intellectual. Although these attitudes of office workers may seem to be extreme expressions of feelings of superiority, similar feelings are expressed by every high-status group toward their "inferiors." Executives have something of the same attitude toward foremen, foremen toward workers, the old-timers toward the newcomers, the skilled workers toward the semi-skilled. In fact we can safely say that everyone in a factory busies himself from time to time with looking down on someone, looking up to someone, or assuring himself that in spite of what certain others think he is just as good as they are. As the girl in the interview said, "We are just as good as they are," and in the next breath voiced her doubts.

Status and Wages

The rate of pay or earnings is, of course, another important source of status differences. This is quite in keeping with a business or factory as an economic enterprise in which everything is supposedly evaluated in terms of money. Thus the higher the pay, the higher the status of the job or the individual. The ten-thousand-dollar-a-year man is far superior to the five-thousand-dollar man, or the dollar-an-hour shop worker is superior to the sixty-cent man. In the same way the job that pays a dollar an hour is superior to the sixty-cent-an-hour job. (Superior in this sense does not always mean more desirable, since individual tastes in jobs vary considerably.) As a result, every work situation in which there is a gradation of wages has a status hierarchy revolving around these wages

and one which is readily upset by any changes in the wage structure.

There is also a status system based upon the different kinds of jobs found in any work group. As a rule the jobs requiring the most skill are at the top and those requiring the least are at the bottom, although other factors may enter in to disturb such a simple arrangement. For example, a job which receives a great deal of attention and recognition from the boss may become the superior job even though other jobs in the group require more skill. Sometimes, too, jobs acquire status because they are always held by long-service people who receive recognition because of their service.

Seniority and Status

Seniority forms the basis for other status differences, with the old-timers feeling that they are somehow superior to the young people and newcomers. In most stable companies there is a feeling toward long-service people something like the attitude toward age which we find in our society generally. The youngsters are thought of as lacking in knowledge and understanding and are expected to give recognition and deference to their elders, while the very old have a place with certain rights and privileges because of their age. The special privileges of old-timers were demonstrated by the nurse in one factory. We quote from an observer's notes:

In a plant which had, before the war, found it necessary to employ only one nurse, the expansion due to the war brought the need for more nurses.

The original nurse had been with the company thirteen years. Then a male nurse was hired for the 4-12 shift. And when a 12-8 shift started, he was transferred to it. Two more nurses were hired, and since none of them wanted to work 4-12 all the time, it was agreed that they should alternate.

The nurse who had seniority took one turn at the afternoon shift and then refused to work it again. The doctor and the personnel manager agreed that she need not take her turn; and the other nurses, although they resented this evident favoritism, seemed to feel that it was done because she had been with the company so long.

Organizational Differences

There are also status differences among organizations, and in any plant there are usually certain organizations which are generally thought of as superior to others. The shop-office distinction accounts for some of this, as the strictly office organizations are usually superior to the shop organizations. As a result a typist or file clerk with the shop department is usually thought to have a "poorer," that is lower-status, job than the typist or file clerk in an accounting department. Also organizations such as engineering or sales, where much of the work requires special training and technical skills, are usually of status superior to shop or accounting organizations. In all such cases the feeling of superiority does not remain merely the prerogative of the salesmen or engineers but carries over even to the most routine jobs in the organization. The office boy in the engineering department, for example, is apt to feel superior to the office boy in the accounting organization.

Complicating Factors

These status systems are not nicely co-ordinated, however, so that the older person always gets more money, has the better job, or is higher in the supervisory structure. We see old-timers in some of the poorest jobs at the lowest pay. We see bright young executives who, with only short service, have climbed high in the supervisory ranks. We see office jobs paying less than shop jobs, or skilled workers earning more than their foremen. We see innumerable complicating factors so that it seems impossible to present a simple picture of the status relationships between individuals within any plant or even in any one department.

We do find, however, that there is a feeling that these various status systems *should* be co-ordinated. This is most strongly expressed in the idea that superiors should earn more than their subordinates. Generally in the supervisory structure wages rise rapidly as you go up in the structure, and it is usually felt to be wrong for a foreman to get less pay than his

subordinates. There is also some tendency for wages to increase with age, and a feeling that this should be so, especially when the rate of pay is not rigidly tied to the kind of job. Also the more highly skilled jobs are often held by the long-service people who have worked themselves up. Interestingly enough, the status difference between office and shop is usually not recognized in pay, especially at the lower levels. Apparently the office jobs are sufficiently attractive, especially to girls, that they are preferred even if the wages are lower, so that in many organizations we find these "better" jobs being paid considerably less than the others

"Placing" People

A matter of common interest and concern to everyone in the factory is the problem of "place" in the social organization. Everyone wants to know where other people "fit" in terms of the functional relations of the work and, what is to many even more important, in terms of the status systems. The newcomer is always faced by the questions, "Who are you?" and "Where do you fit?" In fact, one of the important aspects of getting acquainted on a new job is the process by which the newcomer finds out just where he belongs. He learns whom he will work with and what their status is relative to him and to each other; he learns who are his superiors in the line of authority, who can give him orders and who can not, to whom he should defer and whom he can ignore. All this is the real function of much of the introduction and conversation which often takes place when a new worker comes into a group. For example, the foreman brings a new man over to Joe Blow on the dinkus assembly line, and the conversation goes like this:

FOREMAN: "Joe, this is Jim Blank who is going to work on this assembly. I wish you would show him how to do the job." (Telling Joe that Jim is new and inexperienced on the job.)

JOB: "Howdy, Jim You ever had any experience with dinkus assembly?" (Trying to place Jim a little more accurately.)

JIM: "No. I've been on a drill press in the gadget department for a couple of years" (Letting Joe know that he is not entirely a greenhorn and has had experience on machines as well as service with the company.)

JOE: "You did? Why I worked over there when I first started eight years ago. Is old Jake, the foreman, still as 'sour-puss' as ever?" (Telling Jim that he need not feel that two years of service amounts to much and that he knows about the gadget department too.)

JIM: "Well, Jake's a pretty decent guy after all, even if he does act sour at times. I kinda hate to leave the department, but work was getting slack on the drill presses" (Showing a little annoyance at Joe's implied criticism of the gadget department, and also telling Joe that he had not left to get out of the place or because they did not want him.)

JOE: "Yeah, I used to like Jake and hated to leave there myself." (Sensing Jim's irritation and trying to express a common attitude.)

Scenes such as this occur constantly and in every one the individuals are consciously or unconsciously telling each other just where they fit and how they feel about it, and at the same time finding out about each other. When making introductions or when talking about newcomers, there is this same emphasis on "placing" people. Once the individual's place has been established, however, interest in him and gossip about him shifts to other topics.

Symbols of Status

Because of the importance of status, the individual himself is greatly concerned that he be placed properly, at least not in a position inferior to what he actually occupies. The private may be amused to be mistaken for a lieutenant, but the lieutenant who is mistaken for a private is really burned up. Undoubtedly that is one of the important functions of military insignia. In industry people feel much the same way, with the result that almost every large plant has developed its own insignia, its own set of symbols by means of which everyone can be placed properly in the status system. In general these symbols are not the simple and obvious types evolved by the

armed forces but are much more subtle and indirect. They may be the sort of clothes you wear, the desk you sit at, the position of your desk or work bench, the machine you operate, and so on. In fact, these things are often so indirect that the outsider is not aware that such a symbol system exists at all. Many executives, too, deny that there are such systems, but usually these denials are coupled with an assertion that, even if they do exist, they are wrong and should be abolished. Unfortunately for such a point of view, there is no way to stop people from trying to place one another, or to keep them from being concerned about their own status.

Because of the importance of the distinction between shop and office, there is a strong tendency to differentiate between them in many ways, each of which becomes a symbol to indicate the position of the individual. While the nature of the work usually leads to a separation between office and shop groups, the separation itself becomes an important symbol of the difference in status. As a result most office workers are upset and feel that they have lost status if they are moved from an office location to a shop location even though there is no change in the job. In most large plants where there is a separation of the office and shop organizations there are usually separate washrooms for the office people, and any attempt to have the office people use the shop washrooms, or to bring shop people into the office washrooms, meets with strong resistance from the office people. To be forced to share lockers or washrooms with these "uncouth and inferior" people is a bitter pill to the office people. In such instances all sorts of complaints are voiced about the crowded washrooms, about how untidy the shop people are, about how they throw paper towels or cigarettes on the floor or leave the wash basins grimy from their dirty hands, or about their bad manners and unrefined language. This whole attitude was well expressed in the behavior of a typist who had been transferred from an office location to the same work in a shop: rather than use the shop washrooms which were adjacent to her new loca-

tion, she would walk across a building and up a flight of stairs to a washroom used by an office group.

In many companies there is a payroll distinction, too, between shop and office, the shop workers being paid by the hour and the office by the week. Since both groups are actually paid every week, there is no obvious difference, yet the different payrolls assume the status differences of the two groups. And to move from the hourly to the weekly or salaried payroll is a step up in the world. In some cases this difference may be accentuated by having different time clocks or a different pay day for each group, so that there remains no doubt as to where a person fits. Separate time clocks or pay days are, of course, usually thought of as devices to assist the payroll department in preparing the paychecks, or to spread the work load a bit, but it is surprising how often such devices get mixed up in the status system and become status symbols in themselves. And once they become status symbols, any attempt to change them meets with terrific resistance from the people.

An almost universal characteristic of all types of status hierarchies is that certain prerogatives accompany high status, and as one ascends in the structure he acquires certain rights and privileges which are denied to those below him. Some of these rights have to do with the symbols of status themselves. As one is promoted, he acquires the right to display the insignia of his new place. Others are much more tangible rewards, such as increased freedom from restraints, special rights, additional pay, and so on. For example, the following situation was observed in one small plant:

As more machines were added to the departments, the girls who had the best records in attendance and production or showed aptitude for mechanics were made adjusters. This was considered a promotion although there was no increase in pay. They had a small measure of authority in that they were responsible for seeing that the operators turned out perfect work and for adjusting the machines to make this possible. Since the adjusters operated the machines during the regular lunch period, they ate alone. There were no bells

to ring to signify the beginning and end of their lunch period, so they took a few minutes extra. Although everyone knew about this, nothing was said, so the adjusters felt that they were a little above the ordinary workers.

These symbolic distinctions are well shown, too, in the shop-office division, with the office usually having definite privileges denied to the shop. For example, office workers frequently have a longer lunch hour than shop; they may be free to leave their desks to go to the washroom whenever they please, while the shop is limited to fixed rest pauses. Through the device of the weekly pay, the office workers may take time off or come in late without penalty, while the hourly paid shop workers are usually paid only for the time they are actually on the job.

It is interesting that foremen are generally on the weekly payroll and so are grouped with the office people. It appears, then, that the ordinary factory is split into two groups, one of which is composed of the hourly-paid shop workers, the other of the weekly-paid office workers and the entire supervisory staff. The non-supervisory office workers, furthermore, tend to think of themselves as akin to the supervisory and executive group rather than to the shop workers.

Within the office group itself there is usually a high development of status symbols. Almost anything in the work situation seems to have potentialities for becoming such a symbol whether it be a desk, chair, telephone, location, arrangement of furniture, or whatnot. For example, a telephone directory usually becomes a sort of Who's Who which reflects status more than phone calls. Whether you have a telephone on your desk, or share one with the next desk, or have none at all may be a direct reflection of your status and is usually interpreted that way. In one large organization desks were an important symbol: the lowest clerical workers worked at tables, the next level had single-pedestal desks with one bank of drawers, the supervisors had larger, double-pedestal desks with two banks of drawers, and so on, up to the plant manager who had a great big desk of fancy woods. In such a system, to give

a man a promotion without the proper desk would have given rise to elaborate speculations as to whether he really rated the title or just what was wrong. It would be like promoting a lieutenant but telling him that he would have to still wear his lieutenant's bars, that he was not really a captain yet. The emphasis on these status symbols in one small factory was described by an office worker, as follows:

This same vice-president has three assistant vice-presidents in his department besides his department manager. He gets them increasingly large bonuses each year. He can't give them all private offices, so he gathers them all into one special corner of the office away from their secretaries, gives them each a desk *and* a table and more space for visitors. Their desks have leather desk pads with green blotters instead of the usual rubber mat, and on the whole he keeps them happy. But if one of them were to get a bronze waste basket, they would each have to have one.

In the same way, offices for executives become important symbols of status. In most large organizations there are certain superior offices which, because of size or location, are preferred. Usually these better offices are occupied by the top-ranking men in the organization and reflect their status. Other offices may fit into the status pattern on the basis of their proximity to the "brass hats." Thus the office next to the president is superior to the one down the hall. Where offices occupy several floors of a tall building, the higher offices usually have the most status. The manager or president usually occupies the top floor, and the lesser officials are found somewhere below. In such cases moving to a higher floor is getting up in the world in more ways than one. The importance of location as a status symbol affects the people who work for executives, too, so that their secretaries, stenographers, and even their office boys, feel very strongly the status significance of working on the top floor or in the office next to the president's suite. This was described by a girl in the personnel department of one organization, thus:

Then there is the social problem caused by the physical layout which comprises three floors. The executives' offices are on the tenth

(This is special!) Several departments, including accounting and payroll, are on the ninth (This is O.K.) There is the eighth floor, with dictaphones, typing, filing. (This is Bargain Basement!) The girls on the eighth feel that the girls on the ninth and tenth look down on them. The secretaries on the tenth floor are supposed to be pretty high-hat. Girls on the ninth beg to be transferred "upstairs."

Among shop workers, on the other hand, there is not quite as much emphasis upon status symbols. In general, a person's position in the shop is pretty clearly shown by the work he is doing. The man operating an automatic screw machine is obviously different from the sweeper or material handler, the machinist is superior to his helper, and anyone familiar with shop work can place people easily in the general status system. This does not mean that shop workers are not concerned about status, but merely that the work itself provides fairly obvious status insignia.

With office people, however, as pointed out, the symbols of status are often a major concern and changes in them create terrific disturbances. To account for such emphasis is difficult, but we may present two possible hypotheses. In the first place, the office and supervisory groups probably contain more people trying to get up in the world, who want to improve their status. And these people naturally want to display evidence of any gains; they want people to know where they belong. At the same time, the nature of office work is such that all jobs look alike from a distance; people sitting at desks writing and shuffling papers may be either important executives or the most unimportant clerks. For that reason it becomes important that the superior people acquire symbols to distinguish them from the rest. (And everyone gets upset if the new clerk gets the desk by the boss or one by the window.)

These status symbols are a constant source of conflict and anxiety. Each watches his equals lest they acquire symbols which he lacks; each longs to have the choice office or the large desk and schemes to get it; each judges the importance of his job by symbols which go with it. As a result every

change in arrangement, every movement of people or organizations, may upset the status systems and cause trouble.

An Example of Status Problems

A situation involving status problems, changes, and disturbances in one small factory was described by a personnel officer, as follows:

Fred J, aged 45, was one of the most capable all-around machinists in a tool industry of about 350 employees. A year and a half ago he was placed in charge of a night shift in the approximate capacity of superintendent. The night shift had just been started, and none of the day foremen who might have been eligible for the job seemed to want it.

The initial night force was small, but it grew rapidly to a total of 125 employees. The top management never made a clear announcement of Fred's position as superintendent. He had the duties of a superintendent except that one department operated at night as an independent unit. No clear directive was given to the effect that Fred was in complete charge, although it was intended that this should be generally understood up to the point of his being responsible for all night activities except in the one independent department.

A great deal of antagonism having the appearance of jealousy immediately developed among the foremen of the day shift. The day superintendent likewise seemed to resent the fact of there being another superintendent in the plant. He would often challenge Fred's right to deal with operational matters that extended through both shifts. In a showdown between these two, Fred answered the challenge by saying, "All right, let's go up to George's (the general manager's) office right now, and I'll apologize to you in his presence." The offer was declined.

Characteristic expressions of the day foreman in referring to Fred would run somewhat along the lines of "that fellow that's on nights. . . . I don't know what you'd call him. . . . He ain't a superintendent and I wouldn't even call him a foreman."

The management says that had they clearly designated Fred as a superintendent, they would have had a blow-up. They had to place him where they did because the job had to be done and there

was no one else in the place who would take it and would have their confidence to the same extent

Over a period of sixteen months Fred seems to have been winning his battle slowly. But the whole thing has been marked by a good deal of antagonism, frequent ignoring of notes left by Fred for the day supervision, and quite obvious buck-passing, such as the charging of scrap against the night shift when portions of it belonged unmistakably to the day shift.

In one instance Fred had one of his night operators mark each piece he turned out, a piece which was being produced by both shifts. In the inspector's reports on rejects all the scrap was charged against the night shift. Fred examined the rejected pieces, found that his man's symbol was not on them, and demanded of the inspector, "How come?" The inspector explained, "The day superintendent told me to charge them that way"

CHAPTER II

THE LINE OF AUTHORITY AND COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATION THROUGH THE LINE

The line of authority or chain of command is the linkage of subordinates to superiors running from every person at the bottom of the structure to the Big Boss, the man at the top. This provides the series of relationships through which the commands of the Big Boss are carried downward through the structure to its most distant points. And it is also up this line that information is carried back to the Big Boss, that he is kept informed as to the progress of the work or of significant occurrences. Thus one of the major functions of the line is that of providing channels of communication extending from top to bottom throughout the structure.

The Limitations

It is not, however, the simple, direct channel of communication that it is often thought to be. By its very nature as a linkage of man-boss relationships, it has a number of peculiarities which affect the quality, accuracy, and speed of its transmission. In fact, much of the transmission is so difficult that it is rare for a superior who is several steps removed from the work level to have a comprehensive knowledge of what goes on in the shop. Such a statement may offend the many top executives who speak with glowing pride of how close they are to the work level, of how their subordinates trust them and tell them all. In any sizeable plant, however, where there are hundreds or even thousands of workers at the bottom, it is obvious that the man at the top cannot possibly be kept informed of every detail. His knowledge of the work situation must be limited to only certain kinds of details or general information. The movement of information from the bottom to the top must be limited, and what goes up must be carefully selected. Ideally only those things are communicated to the Big Boss which are necessary for his decisions or which will help him to perform his special functions. Actually this ideal

is rarely achieved, and often important information never arrives at the top, or a lot of small details clutter up the channels.

Although this is a two-way channel with information moving both up and down, there is a striking difference between the kinds of information which go each way. From above comes, "The boss wants to know . . .," and "The orders are . . ."; while from below comes, "This is what happened . . .," "These are the difficulties . . .," and "Here are our successes or our alibis . . ." Rare are the occasions when direct demands move up the line from the bottom or explanations for failures move down from the top. (Remember that we are talking about the flow through the line of authority. Other systems of communication will be discussed later.)

The line as a channel of communication has an important function in two kinds of relationships: first, between each person in the structure and his job; and second, between each one and his boss. Probably everyone is aware of the first function and each one does communicate to adjacent levels the obvious things they need to know to do their jobs. Because this function of communication through the line is more or less effective, the system works, people do their jobs, and goods are produced. The second function of line communication is often ignored or misunderstood, however; and because it is overlooked, the man-boss relationship is often so unsatisfactory as to seriously impair efficiency and co-operation.

Communication Down

Because of the nature of the man-boss relationship, because each person is so dependent on his boss for recognition and communication up the line, because each person is so sensitive to his boss's moods, opinions, likes, and dislikes, there is often much confusion and misunderstanding in communication down the line. Since everyone below him is constantly trying to anticipate his wishes, trying to read his every word and gesture, the boss does not always have to put into words his ideas and what he expects of the job. But as a result of this extreme

sensitivity to the boss, there are in any work situation frequent misinterpretations, and the problem of impressing the boss sometimes becomes more important than getting the work done.

For example, we see the superintendent passing through the shop convoyed by the foreman. Being in a jovial mood, he makes a conversational comment that "the girls seem happy this morning the way they are talking and laughing." The foreman thinks, "Is he hinting that I shouldn't allow them to talk? Does he think I don't keep proper discipline? Those girls ought to have sense enough to stop talking and act busy when he's around. Maybe I better move Mary off by herself because she always gets the others started talking." The boss leaves, quite unaware that his comments have been interpreted as criticism. As soon as he is gone, the foreman bawls out the girls for talking and not paying attention to their work; he moves the Marys around, and it is weeks or even months before the final ripples of disturbance have died down.

Or again, the foreman may come in some morning with a slight indisposition or with family matters on his mind, and he does not notice Joe who is standing near the aisle. Joe, of course, was all set for the usual, "Good morning, Joe. How's everything?" Now he's all upset and he thinks, "What's wrong? Wonder if he's sore about something. Did I do something wrong? Wonder if he saw me kidding with that new girl yesterday and got sore about that." For the rest of the day Joe is so busy trying to figure out what might be wrong that his mind is only half on the job. Finally the boss speaks to Joe about something in a very matter-of-fact way. Joe heaves a sigh of relief and says, "Boss, when you didn't speak to me yesterday, I thought you was sore about something." And the foreman thinks, "These guys are just like a bunch of kids. Just because you don't go around waving and smiling all the time, they think you're sore at them. I wish they would grow up and pay as much attention to their jobs as they do to those little things."

Distortion up the Line

At the same time, and also because of their sensitivity to the boss and their dependence on him, there is a good deal of distortion of the facts in communicating up the line. Along with a great concern for "giving the boss what he wants," there is a constant tendency to "cover up," to keep the boss from knowing about the things that go wrong or the things that do not get done. No one wants to pass bad news up the line, because he feels that it reflects on him. He is supposed to handle his job so that there is no bad news; he has to give his superiors the impression that he is handling his job efficiently. As a result, he does not go running in to tell the boss what a poor job he did or how stupid he was. That is, he does not unless he thinks some one else will get to the boss first with the story. And when he does have to break some bad news to the boss, he will probably have gotten everything fixed up or developed a good alibi for his failure. In this way people at each level develop methods of defense, often complicated and ingenious, by means of which they protect themselves from criticism from those above. For example, we may have the following interchange between a department chief and one of his foremen:

DEPT. CHIEF: "How are things going in your place, Joe?"

FOREMAN: "About as usual." (*Thinking*, I wonder what's on his mind. Maybe he would like to know about our output.) "Looks like we will finish that last order for the Model X gadgets this week. If we do we will beat our promise by about three days" (*Thinking*, He ought to be pleased to hear that, especially after our slow start on that job. Guess I won't mention the trouble we've been having with the Model B, where the inspectors threw out half that first lot. Think we have it licked, but I would rather not worry him with it until we are sure.)

DEPT. CHIEF: "That's fine. Glad to see that job out on time. How's the new Model B order coming?"

FOREMAN: (*Thinking*, Oh, oh! What brought that up? Maybe he's been talking to inspection. Thought Jim would keep his mouth shut. He knew I was getting that fixed up.) "Had a little trouble

on the first lot. Final inspection found some of them out of adjustment. We had to make some changes" [He explains the details of the change at length.] "Think we have it licked now but won't know until tomorrow"

(*Thinking*, That ought to show him that I'm on top of my job Maybe I ought to tell him about my argument with the foreman of the machine department yesterday. Just in case Bob takes it up with his boss Then my boss will want to know all the answers, and I don't want him coming back asking why I don't tell him about these things And I don't want him to think I'm not trying to co-operate with the other departments)

"Say, here's something that came up yesterday You know Bob in the machine department furnishes us with the base plate for Model N gadget. Now that's a tricky job and he wanted to make a few small changes that would make it easier for him I tried to show him why we couldn't use them that way." [He gives a technical explanation] "I would have liked to help him out because he's been having a lot of trouble on that job, but I just didn't see how I could do it. Maybe the engineers ought to take a look at that model"

DEPT. CHIEF: "Yeah, you're right You couldn't do anything If Bob's boss comes to me I'll suggest that we get the engineers to try to straighten out the job Well, glad everything is going along all right. So long."

FOREMAN: "So long." (*Thinking*, Guess he really didn't have much on his mind.)

In such contacts we see the subordinate constantly selecting what to tell the superior, trying to anticipate what the boss wants to know or what he may want to know later, trying to present things in such a way that his boss will feel that things are not too bad, or if they were, that they are now under control, trying to give him good news and take the sting out of bad. And the boss goes away from such contacts feeling that he knows what is going on, that he has his finger firmly on the pulse of the shop.

Filtered Information

Thus we see each individual in the line acting as a filter who sorts over the information coming to him and carefully

selects what he will pass on to his boss. The boss always responds most favorably to good news, so there is a tendency for good news to go up the line quite easily and rapidly. Information as to improvements in output, quality, costs, and so on are transmitted readily from level to level, and as it goes it leaves everyone with that self-satisfied feeling, the I-gave-the-boss-some-good-news-and-he-was-very-pleased-and-thinks-I'm-fine-and-maybe-he-will-tell-the-big-boss-what-a-good-job-I-did feeling. On the other hand, bad news meets certain barriers; everyone is reluctant to communicate his mistakes or failures. The what-will-the-boss-think-of-me feeling acts as a brake upon full and rapid reporting of things which go wrong. It encourages delays, it fosters alibis, it develops skill in the tactful presentation of bad news.

Take the case of Bob, foreman in the machine department, when he suddenly discovers that he does not have enough bronze rod on hand to complete the order of part number X37A22 for the end of the week, and it will keep two hand screw machines going steadily to make delivery on time. So he talks to Charley, the machine operator who came to him asking for the rod:

BOB: "Are you sure there isn't any of that rod over in the rack? When we started on this job I checked the storeroom records and there was plenty on hand."

CHARLEY: "There sure isn't now. You remember when we first started on this order somebody gave us the wrong specifications and we turned out a lot that had to be junked."

BOB: "That's right. Well, I'll call the stockroom and get some more over right away." (*Thinking, I sure did slip up on that I completely forgot to order more rod.*)

[He calls the stockroom.] "I'll need two hundred pounds of that $\frac{3}{8}$ ths bronze rod for part number X37A22. We're in a rush for it, got to get the order out right away and a couple of machines are waiting. Can you get it right over?"

STOCKMAN: "Sorry, we are out of that rod. Won't be able to get it in before Friday. Why didn't you call last week?"

BOB: "Can't you get hold of any before that? If I don't deliver

those parts before Monday, the gadget assembly department will be tied up."

STOCKMAN "We'll do the best we can but don't expect it before Friday. Why don't you guys give us a little more notice instead of waiting until your machines shut down and then expecting us to do miracles?"

BOB (*Thinking*, This is a terrible note! I slip up on ordering that rod at the one time the stockroom is out of it. Why can't they keep some stock on hand instead of trying to work from hand to mouth. Just trying to make a good showing by keeping down inventory and they tie up production. They ought to realize that they are there to help the shop not to give us all this trouble. Wonder what I can do now. The boss sure will give me hell when he hears this. Maybe I ought to check with Joe in gadget assembly to see how many parts they have on hand and how long before he will need more. Maybe I better let him know what's happened so he will know what to expect. Maybe he can plan his work so the people on that assembly job can do something else for a few days.

But if I tell him what's happened, he will tell his boss, and his boss will jump on my boss, and my boss will jump on me for letting this happen and not letting him know. So before I tell Joe anything I better tell my boss. Maybe if I tell him, he can tell Joe's boss and I won't have to say anything to Joe. Joe's going to be plenty sore anyway. He got kind of hot the other day when I tried to get him to let me make some changes in the base plate for that Model N job. Seemed like he was just being stubborn. Wonder if he might have enough parts on hand so he could just go along and say nothing about this affair. If I knew he had enough, I just wouldn't say anything and take a chance on getting some to him before he runs out. I'm afraid to risk it, though, without being pretty sure, because if he did have to shut down, my boss sure would raise Cain. Yeah, and Joe called the other day to know how we were coming on that lot we delivered yesterday, said he didn't want to get caught short. But Joe always does that. He starts crowding you for things long before he actually needs them. He seems to think no one will keep their promises unless he rides them. If I ask Joe how much he has on hand, he will suspect something and I will have to tell him.

Guess I better not take a chance on Joe. I will have to tell my boss first. But gee, how I hate to tell him! I know just what he will think. I know I should have remembered to order more when we

spoiled that first run, but I was so busy getting caught up that I forgot. Anyway, you never would expect the stockroom to be out of a standard item like that. And if they ran this place right, they never would be. But my boss won't care about that. All he'll think is that I must be asleep on the job. He expects me to keep track of everything, and if I have to do the stockroom's job for them to keep my job going, he expects me to do that. What will I tell him, anyway, that won't make me look like a fool who doesn't know his job? Maybe I better not tell him now. It won't hurt to wait till tomorrow, and maybe then the stockroom will know when I can expect the rod. Maybe they will do better than Friday and I might squeeze by. When I do tell the boss, I want to be able to tell him just when we will be able to start on the job again, and maybe I can plan it so we won't hold up the assembly. Guess I will wait till tomorrow and see what I can figure out.)

And Bob spends the rest of the day in a state of jitters trying to figure a way out of the predicament or at least a partial solution which he can present to his boss when he finally is forced to tell him. He goes home that night with a terrible grouch, is cross to the children because they are so noisy, gets annoyed with his wife because she seems so cheerful, can hardly eat his supper, sleeps poorly, and hates to go to work the next morning. Such is the human element of communication up the line.

The Boss's Interests

Since the subordinates are interested in giving the boss what he wants to hear, any signs of interest in certain aspects of the work tend to stimulate the flow of information concerning them. If the general foreman expresses interest, or merely curiosity, concerning a new machine or process, or concern over some problem, or interest in some worker, then in every contact with the foreman he is apt to hear something about the object of his interest. If he has looked on some new worker with favor, the foreman is apt to find some complimentary things to say about the worker; if he learns the job rapidly, the foreman reports that he is a whizz; if he is slow but

friendly with the others, he gets along well; if he is just average, he is coming along well, and so on. If the general foreman did not think so much of a new machine the engineers wanted them to try out, he hears critical remarks. If the machine does the work, the operators find it hard to operate, or they cannot seem to get the hang of it, or the controls are wrong and it is tiring. If it does a poor job, then it is just a piece of junk and never will be worth anything. Furthermore, the minute the boss shows a loss of interest in such details, he stops hearing about them. The moment he responds with obvious boredom or lack of interest his subordinate is apt to sense it and to drop the topic and hunt around for something else to take its place.

As a result of this tendency, the boss is apt to receive a considerable amount of minor and unimportant details about a few aspects of the job. Besides, since such information is usually conveyed merely for the purpose of interesting the boss, it is selected and faintly colored to fit that purpose. Thus he gets snatches of slightly distorted information which makes him feel that he is keeping well informed about what is going on. (Many executives may feel that such a statement does them a gross injustice and that *they* really do know all about their organizations. If they are at the intermediate levels in the structure, however, they will probably tell you confidentially that the Big Boss really is not in close touch with the job and its details.

Since these selective processes are working in all communication from each subordinate to his superior, the taller the supervisory structure the more filter stations the information must pass through before it reaches the top. Thus for a small concern with only two or three levels there is much less selection than for a large concern with five or six levels. Then too, the larger the concern the larger the mass of details at the bottom, a mass which is beyond the powers of any one individual to comprehend in its entirety. Between the sheer volume of detail to be selected from and the successive stages

of selection at each level, the man at the top, the Big Boss, ends up with only a vague and highly generalized picture of what is going on.

Keeping the Boss Informed

Everyone in the supervisory structure expects certain kinds of information from his subordinates, and while the precise details vary with the nature of the job and of the individual, there are certain general types of information which all desire. For one thing, almost everyone in the structure wants to be informed concerning those things about which his boss will inquire. Nothing is more disturbing than to be forced to admit ignorance to your boss regarding events in your organization. When he calls you in and asks, "What about the trouble on X job yesterday?" and you have to reply that you did not know of any trouble there, you immediately feel that you have failed, that the boss is annoyed, that he thinks you are not on top of your job. On the other hand, when you can reply to his question with a detailed statement of the trouble, you feel that you have impressed him with your alertness and ability, have relieved him of any concern about the way you are handling the job, and have generally been a success. There is nothing quite so satisfying as having the right answers for the boss, and having them on the spot without having to say, "I'll look into it and let you know."

Because of this, every subordinate is expected to be on the alert for those things which his boss should know in order to be able to give *his* boss an answer. If the foreman hears that the union is going up to the president on that case which has been kicked around in the department for the last two months, he warns the department chief. If there has been friction with some other department which is apt to be carried up the line, he warns his boss. If the monthly cost report will show some item out of line, the foreman warns his boss. Whatever happens that may get up the line without passing

through the successive levels must be anticipated and each level warned.

The line of authority is, then, a channel through which information moves by fits and starts, is sifted over at each level, and is to a large extent dependent upon face-to-face communication. This means that the larger the organization and the more levels in the supervisory structure, the slower the flow of information either up or down the line. I tell my boss something and he sits on it a day or so before he tells his boss, and so on until it may be weeks before something gets through from bottom to top, that is, if it does not get completely lost on the way. To be sure, there are types of information or certain conditions when items may go bounding up to the top with very little delay. In any case, it is the type of channel which tends to limit the flow of information, slow it down, or censor it; and the longer the channel the greater these effects.

SOME OTHER CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

Accounting System

The accounting system, on the other hand, as a channel of communication is quite different from the line. It lacks the versatility which the line possesses for communicating almost any type of information, for it is limited to certain clearly defined information which is handled in routine fashion. Thus certain records are kept at the work level which then pass through certain stages of processing by the accounting organization and end up as cost reports. These reports do not move from level to level but usually go directly to any level or even to several levels simultaneously. Once the routines are established, the system acts as a smoothly working channel to take certain information from the work level directly to the top without delay or censorship beyond what is set up in the system itself. The accounting system is also a one-way channel in which information moves only from the work level upward and never from the top down.

"Short-Circuiting" the Line

The process of taking information from the work level up to the top without passing through the line supervisors is what is frequently referred to as "short-circuiting" the line. This term is used for any communication which skips steps in the line, as when a worker with a complaint goes in to see a superintendent instead of his foreman or department chief, or when an engineer takes up some problem with a higher level before consulting the foreman on the job. In all such cases the line supervisors may feel very insecure, since their superiors will learn things about the work which have not first passed through the line and of which the line may know nothing. This information may give rise to criticisms or questions which the lower levels are not prepared to answer. There is nothing better for producing insomnia than to think the boss knows something about the job that you do not know and is going to ask questions that you cannot anticipate.

Communication between Organizations

Much of the communication between organizations is through the "channels," that is, up the line of one organization until it reaches the individual who is at the top and then back down the line of the other organization (Fig. 3). This is the

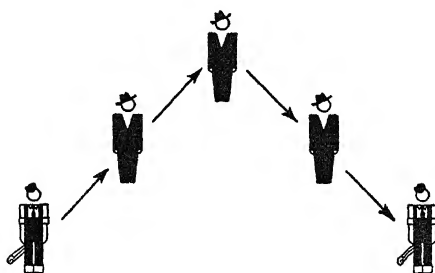


Figure 3. Communication Through Channels

formal, correct, and "safe" procedure. When followed, each level is informed and can control what is passed on to the

next, and there is no danger of "short-circuits." There is also, however, some direct communication between the lower levels of the various organizations which does not go up the line.

Each type of communication between organizations has certain characteristics and certain difficulties. In a large organization, for instance, communication is often so slow that it seriously slows down the job. For example, take the following not too hypothetical case:

Joe, foreman of the Assembly Department, thinks it might help him to plan his work if he could have a little advance information on the progress of the work in the Machine Department on some of his piece parts. He would like to have regular weekly reports from the Machine Department, and he decides to ask his boss about it. His department chief thinks that it is a good idea and says he will take it up the line. The department chief waits a couple of days until he has a chance for a long talk with the division chief, when he presents the idea. The division chief says it sounds good to him, and why not bring it up in the weekly meeting of his department chiefs next Monday to see if something can be worked out. Next Monday the idea is discussed and the department chief of the Machine Department says it sounds as if there might be possibilities. But, he says, it will put additional work on his foremen so he would like to talk it over with them first. The division chief thinks this sounds reasonable, so the next day the idea is presented to the Machine Department foremen by their department chief. They complain that the idea sounds good but is not as simple as it might be, since they do not ordinarily keep just the proper records to give that particular information. To do it accurately, they say, there will have to be additional records which will mean additional clerical help, say about ten man-hours a week. The department chief then goes back to his boss and says it cannot be done unless they can arrange for this additional help. The division chief agrees to this, and the next day he tells the Assembly Department chief that the plans are being worked out to get the informa-

tion. Finally, several weeks after he originated the idea, Joe is told that it will be carried out.

While communication directly across from one foreman to another is much quicker and simpler, it is apt to be limited because of each foreman's concern over his relations with his superior. If Joe talks to Jim about difficulties he is having, and if Jim repeats it to his department chief, and if the department chief mentions it to Joe's boss who has not yet heard of the difficulty, then the boss questions Joe, and both of them are apt to be disturbed. One of the important principles of communication up the line, as already pointed out, is to be sure that you keep your boss informed about anything which he is apt to hear of from other sources, so that when these things are mentioned by others, he is able to talk about them intelligently. Since the movement of information out from the work situation through any other channel than the line is apt to place the higher levels in an uncomfortable position, all such flow is limited.

Written Communication

Written communication in the form of letters, memos, reports, records, instructions, and so on plays an important part in the total process. Practically all communication through the accounting system is in some written form which can be retained for future reference. Also anything from the top which becomes part of the formal instructions, rules, or policies is almost always in written form. As a rule such written material has a permanence lacking in the strictly verbal communications. Thus everyone keeps a file of correspondence, reports, memoranda, and so on, in which he keeps everything he receives and everything he sends out.

Written communication, however, is slow and time-consuming compared to verbal communication. You want to get some information from someone in another department, so you dictate a memo and then wait for a reply. Your correspondent receives the memo and sooner or later dictates a reply.

Or if you are at one of the lower levels without a secretary, you scribble out a note and try to get some typist or secretary in the department to type it for you. Or if you are one of those who came up the hard way without benefit of formal education and feel somewhat sensitive about your use of English, you just do not write anything you can avoid and trust to verbal communication. In any event, five minutes' conversation is more effective for the interchange of ideas or information than six weeks of correspondence, and it is only when there is serious antagonism or conflict between two individuals that they depend upon writing for much of their communication.

"The Grapevine"

Within any factory, too, there is also a large amount of what may be called informal communication which is not following the channels or any formally designated patterns, and which is concerned primarily with the human relations of the work situation and serves the needs of the people rather than the needs of the job. This is what is commonly referred to as the "grapevine," and in most places comes to be an accepted feature of the system. Usually it is nothing more than the passing on of information from one friend to another without regard to any formal organizational lines. Often there is a clique of secretaries to the top executives who keep each other informed as to what is going on. Sometimes there are luncheon groups of supervisors from various departments which enable them to trade news of changes and developments, rumors or gossip about what is going on throughout the company. Individuals have friends in various organizations, from whom they can get off-the-record information and keep in touch with those organizations, and to whom they are careful to give similar information and informal reports.

The successful operation of the grapevine, however, is dependent upon the discretion with which each person uses the information it brings him. If Jim tells Joe at lunch that his department is having trouble on a certain job, and Joe goes

around talking about the trouble that Jim is having, it usually ends up with Jim being mad at Joe and feeling that he cannot trust him. And from then on, Jim either avoids Joe or is careful not to tell him anything that should be treated confidentially.

Summary

Such a description of the complications and limitations of communication, especially through the line of authority, might give the impression that communication between levels in the industrial status system is completely ineffectual. Actually, of course, this is not true. People at the bottom of the structure do produce the goods, and those at the top do control that production and maintain their authority over those below. The point to be made here is that, because of the nature of the man-boss relationship, because it and other status relationships in the system are not clearly recognized and understood, communication sometimes actually interferes with satisfactory work relations and effective production, even though it is thought of as facilitating these things.

CHAPTER III

THE FUNCTIONS AND PROBLEMS AT EACH LEVEL

So far we have been looking at all supervisors as a uniform group, all alike part of a status system and part of a communication system, all links in the line of authority, and all having the same kind of role in an intricate linkage of man-boss relationships. When, however, we examine the kinds of work they actually do at each level of supervision, and the kinds of relationships they have with others, we see that there is a shift in activities and job functions from one supervisory level to another up the line. A superintendent does not have the same function as a foreman. He doesn't have the same job, nor the same contact with the work situation, nor the same relationship with the workers. His attention, power of authority, and feelings of identification are different from those of a foreman.

Suppose we consider again a representative hierarchy for a concern in which we have a president, superintendents, division chiefs, department chiefs, and foremen, as five levels of supervision (Fig. 1). In such a factory the foremen and department chiefs are usually located at desks in small office spaces in the work location in plain sight of the workers. The division chiefs, superintendents, and president are located in private offices on the top floor of the building away from the noise and dirt of the work location.

THE FOREMAN

Daily Activities

Most of the daily activities of the first-line supervisor are related directly to the work and the workers. He is on the floor, actually seeing that work gets done, a good part of the day. Usually he spends a few minutes at his desk looking over the work schedules or orders for the day and the records of deliveries for the day before. Maybe he consults with other foremen or with his department chief about plans for the day. He then goes out on the floor for the rest of the day.

may start the day by walking around the shop, seeing that everyone is getting started on their work, perhaps answering questions, giving instructions, and then goes back to spend some time at his desk. Throughout the day he usually spends most of his time on his feet, moving about the floor, keeping in contact with the workers and the work, listening to problems, making decisions, and directing the workers. He does not wait for his group to come to him with problems, but tries to keep in touch and available at all times. He also spends some time with other foremen in the department and may join them at rest periods for a smoke and a cup of coffee or have lunch with them. He also spends a little time with his department chief whenever he is available, and may show him various jobs or discuss problems with him.

From this we see that the foreman, who is usually considered the first level of management, is the one who has the most direct and detailed knowledge of the job and the workers. He is the one who has the most frequent contact with the workers. He plans and directs their work; he checks and judges their work; he maintains discipline and enforces the rules. To the workers he is the one who gives them orders, and who rewards and punishes. And it is through him that all the pressures downward through the structure, all the demands and orders moving down the line, are transmitted directly to the work group.

Orientation and Perspective

Out of his intimate relationship with the work the foreman develops an orientation toward it which is different from that of the rest of the hierarchy. In the first place his attention is focussed on the everyday details; he sees all the immediate difficulties, and all the complexities of getting the work out; and he usually knows a lot about the workers and their attitudes. As a result he tends to be impatient with higher levels or with staff people who try to generalize on the basis of partial knowledge and make decisions which affect his job. He frequently

feels that his superiors impose things on him and on his group without trying to understand the difficulties of his job. He feels that it is easy for them to say "do this" or "give us this information," but that he is the one who has to carry out the orders and still keep the job going.

Since he controls his job primarily through direct knowledge of the details, he feels little need for records or reports. He tries to know what is going on when it happens rather than learn about it later through reports. In many cases he is expected to collect data and prepare reports which his superiors then use to put pressure on him. He is impatient, therefore, of elaborate reports or paper controls, since they tend to keep him at his desk away from contacts with the job, since they mean extra work and may mean more pressure from above. Also he knows the inadequacies of such records and is critical of decisions based upon them. Thus he always prefers the job on which records and reports are kept to a minimum and can be taken care of by some clerk so that he does not have to do paper work himself.

Attitudes and Identification

When we talk to foremen about their jobs, their superiors, and their subordinates, we see a variety of attitudes. In some cases they have strong feelings of sympathy with the work group, a sort of identification with the workers, in which the foreman acts as though he were one of them and is constantly defending them both from his superiors and from outside organizations. In such cases there is usually a very friendly and informal relationship between the foreman and his group. They may joke together and the workers feel free to discuss their personal and work problems and to voice their complaints. Generally in this situation there seems to be very little barrier between them because of difference in rank, and the foreman maintains little social distance or distinction between himself and the group. Many of these situations are characterized by a much greater distinction between the fore-

man and his department chief, and sometimes there is a very strong barrier between these two levels. In such cases there is little interaction between the two, and the foreman may actually avoid contacts and force the department chief to come to him. Also the foreman will try to keep the department chief away from his group, try to be present when he is around the work situation, try to cover up mistakes, protect individual workers from his criticism, and otherwise try to build strong barriers between them. He will resist demands and changes from above, always finding reasons for not accepting or for their failure if they are forced upon him. Such situations are diagrammed in Figure 4.

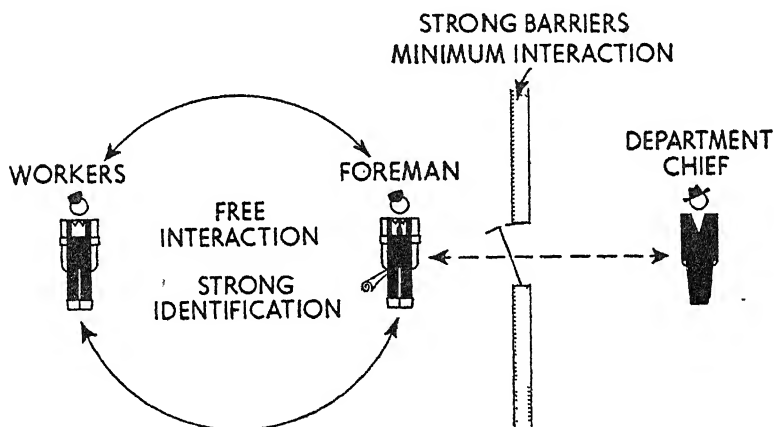


Figure 4. Foreman Identified With Workers

The opposite of this situation is the foreman who has a strong identification with management and his superiors and holds his subordinates at a distance. He tends to be critical of the workers, feels that they are not dependable or are not trying to do a good job, and is not interested in them as individuals. They feel that he is aloof and disinterested and hesitate to talk freely to him or to discuss problems with him. When together at department parties neither he nor the workers feel comfortable and they tend to stay apart. He is apt to seek out contacts with his superiors, both on the job or outside.

He is often concerned about his relationship with his department chief and always tries to make a good impression. Thus there is a situation of close relationship between foreman and department chief and considerable distance between foreman and worker (Fig. 5).

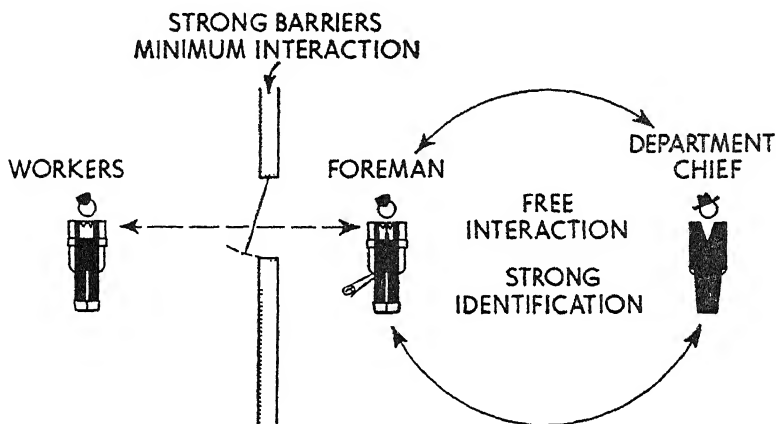


Figure 5. Foreman Identified With Department Chief

In this type of situation the workers feel forced to be on their guard against their foreman and think of him as someone who is against them rather than for them. They develop various defenses; they watch their behavior whenever he is in sight; they may restrict output without his knowledge; they may complain about him to the union. Sometimes the tension makes contacts so uncomfortable that even he is aware of it and may withdraw to some extent from the work situation. In such extreme cases he spends most of his time at his desk, talking to his superiors, or entirely out of the department.

Sometimes, on the other hand, we find a situation in which there is very strong identification and integration between all three, the workers, the foreman, and the department chief. In such cases we see very easy interaction between workers and department chief, and the department chief is usually in close touch with the details of the job and with the individuals. The foreman feels very comfortable under these conditions, does

not worry about the presence of the department chief, does not need to cover up mistakes or try to protect the group, since the boss can be trusted. In many instances of this kind, the whole department stands as a unit against outside pressures or against demands from above. Probably these are the most comfortable and satisfactory work situations for the foreman and for the workers.

Sometimes we see a foreman who is isolated from both his department chief and the work group. In these cases there is considerable avoidance on the part of all concerned. If the job will run with a minimum of direct supervision and interaction with the workers, the foreman may stay out of the group most of the time and stay away from his department chief, too. As long as the work goes all right, the department chief also avoids the foreman and the group, and all contacts are very formal and uncomfortable. If the job does not go well, the foreman is in a difficult spot, since his boss will be quite critical of him and often make arbitrary demands. At the same time the group is defensive and does not respond to the foreman's demands. He tries to pass the buck to them for any failures and is generally critical just as his boss is critical of him. Under these conditions both the foreman and the workers are uncomfortable, and whenever there is pressure on the foreman from above, he feels extremely isolated and defenseless and takes it out on his subordinates. In other words, such situations may be fairly stable as long as the work is running well, but when under pressure, they develop a great deal of friction between foreman and workers.

The Forgotten Man

Because of his position at the bottom of the management hierarchy, the foreman often feels that he is the forgotten man. He rarely participates in the making of decisions or the determination of policy, and often is not well informed as to the why and wherefore of such decisions. All too frequently he knows only that management has decided to do thus and so

and, in many cases, expects him to put the decisions into action. While theoretically his ideas or sentiments are communicated up the line and are taken into account when management makes decisions, he knows that actually they only get through to the top in a very hit-or-miss manner and rarely influence decisions or policy. Certainly he almost never has the satisfaction of communicating them directly and seeing that they are actually considered. Of course, management occasionally makes the gesture of consulting the foremen, but usually all it amounts to is to call them together after a decision has already been made and to go through the motions of talking it over with no real idea of changing if the foremen object. Such meetings are often thought of as an attempt to "sell" the foreman on management's decisions rather than as an honest attempt to let them join in making the decisions.

All this does not mean that foremen necessarily think that they are qualified to make the decisions which top management must make. They do, however, often feel that, while top management often talks of them as being part of management and expects them to identify with the interests of the company and of top management, it does not make them feel that they really belong. They feel that they are expected to take whatever is handed down to them from above no matter how arbitrary it may seem to them nor how difficult it may make their jobs.

Management's Ideal

Nevertheless, top management is frequently concerned about the attitudes of their foremen. They often feel that the foremen are incompetent and need more training. They think that they do not identify with management, do not understand and accept the aims of management, do not carry out decisions. Top management's ideal of a foreman is one who thinks much as they do, who understands their problems sufficiently to accept their decisions without question, and is a "good soldier," that is, one who accepts orders and carries them out without

question or reservation. Yet often it is the actions and pressures originating at the top which create doubt and uncertainty on the part of the foreman, which prevent him from identifying completely with management, which make him feel insecure. Thus we often see a foreman acting the way he does because of the pressure upon him, and at the same time being criticized for being that way.

Foreman and Morale

As we have seen, a foreman is in constant contact with the worker and has the responsibility of putting into action many of management's policies and decisions. Thus he is to a considerable extent the one who interprets management to the workers; he is to a large degree the only representative of management with whom the workers have much contact; he is the one who imposes management's controls upon them. For this reason he has an important influence upon the workers' attitudes toward the job, the management, and the company generally. He is the one who can most directly affect the morale and loyalty of the workers. While his importance to employee morale has long been recognized, recent studies have shown that in many respects he is the most important factor in the work situation. For example, in a preliminary report on extensive research being conducted by the Committee on Human Relations in Industry of the University of Chicago, the author reported as follows:

Some of the things which stand out quite clearly are the factors which are especially significant in determining the attitudes of people toward their jobs. In general, it appears that a few factors in the work situation are generally responsible for active enthusiasm or dislike, while other factors play a much more passive role.

It is important to note that these active elements are those things involving the individual's relations with others on the job. The things that really "burn 'em up" are the things the boss says or does, or the things that go on in the gang, or the way other employees act toward them. And they respond with enthusiasm to the congenial

group and friendly boss. This was well shown by the statement of an industrial truck driver.

"I've had a lot of different jobs; I've worked in lots of factories, but I've never seemed to feel quite right about them somehow. I mean that I never cared much about the job; it was just something I had to do. But this is different. I've never been on a job before where the men help one another the way they do out there. Why if one man is done with his work, he doesn't sit down and wait for something to turn up like they do on most jobs. He goes and helps somebody else. And the men will ask someone to help them, and I never seen one of them get turned down. Everybody always seems to want to help everybody else. And sometimes when I don't have anything to do for a minute or two I go over and watch one of the machines and the fellow who runs it, he'll explain it to me and tell me how it works. That's something I never seen them do any place else."

It is quite clear, furthermore, that of all the relationships within the work situation, the relation with the foreman or immediate supervisor is the most critical of them all. This is nothing new and is often expressed in the statement that "the foreman is the front-line personnel man." It is interesting, however, to see the strong emotional significance of this relationship as it is expressed in interviews. For example, a former machine setter with ten years' service left his job to take one for less pay and said:

"On that job there wasn't a day went by without the foreman would have some crack to make just to get your goat or just to be mean to you. He's supposed to be the foreman, but as far as I can figure he didn't do nothing but go around making everybody sore. If you'd ask him some question about the work, something about one of the machines or something like that you wanted to know, he'd look real nasty and he'd say, 'You're the operator. What d'ja want me to do about it?' And then he'd walk off; he'd never give you any help. 'You're the operator,' he'd say. 'What d'ja want me to do about it?' And that's all he would ever do for you."

"But if you'd argue with him about something or make some suggestion or something, he'd tell you to just mind your own business and do your own job. 'I do the thinking around here,' he'd say. 'You just tend to your work and I'll do the thinking for all of us.' *He* does the thinking! Huh! Yeah, the heck he does. All I can see that he ever does is to go around pickin' on everybody."

"And when you go over to ask him a question, any kind of question-- Well, maybe it does sound a little dumb or something, but you're sincere when you ask it and it's something you want to know—but he'll just make fun of you for asking it and say the question again, mocking you, and not give you any answer to it. He could never give you a polite answer, always got to be something sarcastic, so that you get so you don't want to have to talk to him about anything if you can help it. And you get so when you see him coming you get all nervous and wonder what's coming now. What kind of a nasty crack he's going to make this time.

"When you get someone like that around you all the time it makes you get so you don't want to go to work at all. Some jobs you get up in the morning, and you feel like going to work; you feel good about it and you're glad you got a job and that you're going to it. But this job, I got so I'd lie in bed in the morning and think, 'If I just didn't have to go to work, if there was something the matter with me so I wouldn't have to go, if I could only think of some reason for staying home today!' I'd just wonder to myself, 'Now, what's he going to think of today? What's he going to find that he can pick on?' And then I'd start worrying. And by the time I'd get to my breakfast I didn't even want to eat. And I'd just sit there trying to figure out some way I could get out of having to go down there; but there never was. You gotta work; if you have a job you gotta go to it."

When we seek to determine the effects of such things as employee benefits, vacations, good working conditions, and all the morale building devices, we immediately find ourselves in a region of vagueness and contradictions. While the interviews were with all kinds of people from a wide variety of companies, there was little spontaneous talk about such factors in work situations. Even with workers from companies which were well known for their advanced personnel systems, it was rare to have enthusiastic talk about these matters. What people seemed most concerned about, what they really wanted to talk about, were the matters of their daily relationships with their boss and fellow-workers. Furthermore, where there was some show of enthusiasm for company policies or benefits, it was always coupled with statements about it being a friendly place to work or having a swell boss. In fact, if the supervisors were fine and fellow-workers friendly, almost anything might be referred to as showing what a

fine place it was. For example, in some cases, after praising the boss, the individual would make some such statement as, "The company is really interested in the workers. Why, you know they give us a ten minute rest period every morning and afternoon, and recently they put in a vending machine so we could buy a coke during rest period."

Closely related to this problem of the attitude of workers towards their jobs is the problem of turnover. In considering this we found it useful to think of the work group as being subject to a number of forces, some of which tend to hold it together and others of which tend to force it apart. Furthermore, it is clear that some of the forces operating arise from the outside society and are not readily controllable by management. On the other hand, many of the forces arise within the work situation itself and can be influenced or controlled by the management of the individual concern.

When we examine present conditions we see that the war has set in motion a variety of disrupting forces which increase the rate of turnover. Obviously, unless such disruptive forces are compensated for by the cohesive forces within the work situation, there is bound to be a sharp increase in turnover. Unfortunately, the effects of war-time expansion and conversion have also increased the disruptive forces within the work situations, with the result that turnover has increased excessively.

Discussion with people concerning why they do or do not change jobs has shown several things. Just as their attitudes towards their job is strongly influenced by their relations with their superiors and with fellow-workers, also their decisions as to whether to stay or leave often hinge on these relations. As in the interview quoted, it is apparent that unsatisfactory relations with the boss constitute a powerful disruptive force, while the foreman who is liked is an equally powerful stabilizing force. To quote a worker who had made several changes in the last few years:

"You know why people are changing jobs? It's simply because jobs are plentiful and people don't have to take a pushing around¹ by these dumb grafters who call themselves supervisors. Sure, when times are tough a man has to work at his job whether he likes it or not; he has to take it. But why should he today. You know, it's a funny thing,

but when you work around here and there and see how people are treated, you get so you enjoy telling a foreman to go to—it's fun.

"My present boss I would do anything for simply because he is the only man who has ever shown any confidence in me. It's the one company I worked for where a man in supervision shows some consideration for the people under him. I think the entire management shows that attitude. These companies are always talking about backing up the foreman, yet the only backing that really means anything to a foreman is the backing of the men under him. What good does it do the company to be constantly backing up the foreman if that foreman has a big turnover or can't get the cooperation of his men? My boss never has to ask the company to back him up, because he has the backing of the men. I would do anything for him and so would the other guys."¹

THE DEPARTMENT CHIEF

The activities, attitudes, relationships, and functions of a department chief are usually quite different from those of a foreman. As we have seen, he is not as close to the actual work even though he sits nearby. He usually spends more time at his desk, reading reports, going over and signing various papers, preparing memoranda to his boss. He spends much more time out of the work location, in the division chief's office, in conference with other department heads, or with engineers, inspectors, or other staff people. He deals with many of the relationships with other departments, and he may be active in co-ordinating the work of his department with that of others.

Since he is not directly in control of the job, he relies to a considerable extent upon reports from his foreman for his knowledge of what is going on. He usually expects his foremen to give him daily information as to the progress of the work and any significant occurrences, and especially information on anything about which he may be questioned by his

¹Burleigh B. Gardner, "A Program of Research in Human Problems in Industry," *American Management Association, Personnel Series Number 80* (1944), pp. 35-38.

division chief. Thus he is constantly gathering information from his foremen which he uses in his contacts with superiors or with others. The foremen may report to him any failures of delivery or faulty materials from other departments, and he can then use this information either in contacting the other departments or for communication to his boss. He pays more attention to formal reports, too, such as cost, quality, or earnings, than does the foreman. On the whole he relies on his foremen's verbal reports to keep him in touch with the job, and thereby expects to have a general idea of how the department is getting along before the formal control reports appear.

Perspective and Participation

Department chiefs generally identify with management much more than foremen do. They seem to be much more "management minded," they show more interest in costs and efficiency, and they accept the rules more completely. This may be the result of their separation from the work itself, plus their increased participation in planning and co-ordinating and contacts up the line. In general the broadening of participation, so that the individual has to become familiar with problems of co-ordination beyond those of his immediate organization, seems to shift his orientation, so that he thinks more like management and sees the more general problems. Furthermore, the department chief is apt to participate in discussions with both division chiefs and superintendents. He may be called in to discuss proposed policies, changes in practices, technological developments, and so on. He has more opportunity than the foreman does to voice his opinions, to see the processes of decision-making and possibly to influence them, and he generally has more of a feeling of being a part of management.

Relations with Workers

To the workers the department chief is the highest level of authority readily available with whom they may have fairly

frequent contact and to whom the foreman must turn for decisions. He is the highest level of "visible" authority and to many is the "boss." While they recognize that he is subordinated to the higher levels, he is still the one who transmits the demands from above the department. He has the final say on most matters concerning them and may overrule the foreman. Because of his location in the shop, the barriers to approaching and contacting him are much less than with higher levels of supervision. He is someone they can get to. But, at the same time, actual interaction with him is considerably less frequent than with the foreman. He is not the one who constantly watches over their work; he is not ever present, "breathing down their necks" all day long as the foreman is. As a result, if he is friendly and has an approachable manner, they may often feel that he is more understanding and sympathetic than their foreman, and that he can be trusted to be fair with them even if their foreman cannot. On the other hand, if he is forbidding and critical, he may be the focus of their complaints and may be thought of as the source of everything that goes wrong on the job. If he is friendly, they feel that they can get to him if their foreman is too disagreeable and he will fix things up. If he is unfriendly, there is no escape from an unpleasant foreman; there is no one in authority to whom they can turn for help.

On his part the department chief usually has quite a different attitude toward the workers than that of the foreman. The foreman has to deal directly with the workers in his efforts to get the job done; he must deal with them each individually; he sees their faults and errors; and when things are going badly, he is apt to be irritated and critical of them. The department chief, however, usually thinks of the foremen as being the ones responsible for the work and even for the behavior of the workers. When things go poorly, he blames the foreman rather than the individual workers. Even when the workers break the rules, he is apt to blame the foreman for not maintaining discipline. Thus each level wields authority over the one below, and under this direct pressure friction is likely to

be generated. At the same time the department chief can remain aloof and friendly to the workers without becoming involved in frictions between them and the foreman.

THE DIVISION CHIEF

At the division chief level we move into the area of invisible authority. The division chief sits in an office away from the shop. He has little first-hand contact with the job and may appear among the workers only infrequently. He really is in the realm of the "big shots" and the "brass hats." And not only is he far from the work, but the gap between him and the department chief, or what has been called "social distance,"² is apt to be greater than between any other two levels. The marked cleavage between these two levels was noted by Roethlisberger and Dickson in the Western Electric study.³ As they point out, however, this does not mean that there is more conflict and hostility between these two levels. It does mean that there is a greater difference in sentiments and interests with the change from visible to invisible authority.

At the division chief level we really come to the management group. Division chiefs are away from direct contact with the work level; they cannot just step out into the shop to see how things are getting along, the way a department chief can; and they are not generally concerned with the details of one small part of the job or with the work of one group. They sit at their desks and gather their information through reports, memos, and conferences with their department chiefs. They

²a) "The concept of 'distance' as applied to human, as distinguished from spacial relations, has come into use among sociologists, in an attempt to reduce to something like measurable terms the grades and degree of understanding and intimacy which characterize personal and social relations generally." (Robert E. Park, "The Concept of Social Distance," *Journal of Applied Sociology*, VIII [1924], p. 339.)

b) "If, as we shall assume, grades of understanding and intimacy between persons or groups, or between a person and a group, are dependent upon the degree to which they share the same sentiments and interests, 'social distance' measures differences in sentiment and interest which separate individuals or groups from one another or an individual from a group." (F. J. Roethlisberger and W. J. Dickson, *Management and the Worker* [Harvard University Press, 1939], p. 359 footnote.)

³Op. cit., pp. 359-60.

concern themselves with problems of co-ordination and planning for their divisions and with liason with other divisions. They rely to a great extent upon cost and performance reports and usually have charts showing various measures of performance so that they can keep a close watch on any changes. They are apt to be very cost-minded and to be constantly after their departments to keep costs down or to keep within the budget.

While the division chief level is getting into management, this is not really top management. The primary concern of a division chief is with running the job, keeping the pressure on the shop departments, and keeping a close watch on the controls. He does not spend his time with future planning, with policy-making, or with major decisions. We might say that the focus of his attention is downward upon the job, and he often resents too much change or interference coming from above, since these things always disturb the equilibrium which he is attempting to maintain in the job.

THE SUPERINTENDENT

At the superintendent level we really reach top management. Supervisors at this level usually constitute the "staff" of the president. They sit in on decisions of policy; they participate in the planning; they must concern themselves with the future. In dealing with the job they are even less concerned with details, and even more concerned with the over-all situation than the division chief is. They do not feel that they must keep up with a mass of everyday details, but rely on their subordinates for that. And when, as often, they have to make decisions about specific situations, they expect their subordinates to bring them such details as are pertinent and must be considered.

Diverging Points of View

In many companies a sharp cleavage can be found at about this level. The striking thing about such a cleavage is the sharp divergence in point of view and attitudes between the executive whose attention seems to be directed downward, who

is always thinking in terms of his organization and is engrossed in the problems of its operation, and the higher-level executive who thinks more in terms of the company as a whole and all its extended activities and relationships. In some cases this cleavage appears just above the superintendent level, between president and superintendent; often it is particularly striking between the president and the superintendent who is in charge of the manufacturing organization. In other cases the greatest divergence is found just below the superintendent, between superintendent and division chief; this is particularly true in large companies with an extended supervisory hierarchy. Because this cleavage seems to appear with equal frequency at either level, either just above or below the superintendent, it is difficult to talk about superintendents as a uniform or general group.

Identifying with Work Group

On the one hand we find the superintendent who is looking downward identifying himself with the work group, sympathetic with his division chief, and impatient with the "Big Boss" who seems to be more concerned with his luncheons and clubs than with running the business. These attitudes seem to be especially marked when there is a great difference in background or industrial experience between a superintendent and the man at the top. A manufacturing superintendent, for example, is often an old-timer who has risen gradually through the ranks of the manufacturing organization and has spent his whole life in that setting. Higher executives, on the other hand, have frequently risen through other channels, such as engineering, sales, or accounting organizations, or may have been brought in from other positions or locations. Such divergence in background seems to sharpen the differences which arise out of their positions and functions in the structure, and frequently results in mutual feelings of irritation and exasperation. The superior thinks that his subordinate is hard-headed and "set in his ways," that it is impossible to get him to accept

new ideas or see changing conditions and adapt to them. He has an excessive tendency to cling to the old ways, thinks the top executive, to stay in the same old grooves. At the same time, the superintendent feels that his superior is forever trying to change things just for the sake of change, that he does not see the difficulties or the effects of these changes upon the work. His superior seems to be always critical, when the superintendent wants merely to be left alone to run the job and see that the work gets done. As a result, we often find this type of superintendent very defensive, trying to protect his organization from the demands of the Big Boss, reducing interaction to a minimum, and generally trying to erect a protective wall around himself and his group, much as division chiefs and department chiefs do. And how this annoys the Big Boss! As one top executive said:

For all the influence I have, you would never know that the plant is part of the company. Why, if I go into the plant for anything, I hardly get in the door before the superintendent is standing by my side, and he stays with me until I leave. And I know that I only get to see the things that he wants me to see. And trying to introduce any changes seems a hopeless task; it's like pushing against a stone wall. Even when he seems to agree to something, it goes only slowly and half-heartedly, and there are a dozen things wrong with it.

And yet the plant runs well in terms of getting production and making money. There isn't any major thing to complain about. But we feel that it isn't going ahead. Instead of constantly improving the plant, the processes, or their organization, they are just marking time. While it seems to be going along all right now, we are afraid of what it will be in a few years, and we want to see it improving so it can meet whatever comes.

We have just been sitting tight and trying to make a few changes gradually, and I think we are making some progress, but it is awfully slow. I suppose the only way to do anything with it very rapidly is to go in and tear it limb from limb and put it back together the way we want it. But the situation isn't bad enough to justify that, and that would mean the end of the superintendent; he would just

have to quit along with a few others. We would much rather handle it without taking such drastic steps.

Oriented Like the President

On the other hand, there are many superintendents who are oriented like the president, looking outward to problems of public relations, governmental regulations, and all the various external things which affect the functioning of a business. They are often active in outside affairs, attend meetings and luncheons, belong to business organizations, take part in community affairs, and in various ways extend themselves beyond the walls of the plant. In such cases there is likely to be the same antagonism, the same social distance, the same mutual feelings of annoyance between superintendent and division chief as that described between president and superintendent above. And, as at the higher level, these feelings are intensified when there is a marked difference in their backgrounds, when the division chief is the one who came up the hard way and the superintendent the one who came in through staff organizations or from outside.

THE BIG BOSS

Outside Activities

Top management, and especially the very top, the president, or in larger companies the works manager or the plant manager, faces certain problems which are of little concern to those lower in the structure. In the first place, the top executive is constantly concerned with the position of the company in the entire industrial and economic system, and with co-ordinating its activities so that it will meet competition, survive social, economic, and political changes and generally maintain itself as a going concern. This means that he must keep informed on a whole range of matters in the outside world, must be evaluating them in terms of their effect upon his concern, and laying plans or making changes in the internal activities to meet these conditions. As a result he is constantly seeking

information through various sources. He reads news letters, market reports, and technical journals, and follows the financial pages carefully. But often even more important to him is a knowledge of what other business men are doing and how they are interpreting the course of events. So he belongs to business men's clubs and attends dinners and meetings where he will be able to exchange ideas and information with others on his own level. These contacts often make it possible for him to act in harmony with other top executives as a group, either through conscious effort or, more often, unconsciously merely by following the example of a few leaders. These groups in which he moves are, furthermore, an important part of his social environment; they become the groups he feels identified with; they are his kind; and inevitably he tries to maintain his position among them. This means that he often acts and talks in ways which he thinks will be acceptable to the group, or tries to gain their respect for his judgment and abilities, or tries to increase the standing of his company in terms of size or prestige in its field.

These activities of the top executive are very important to the concern as a whole, since they provide the basis for many new decisions which effect the future adaptation of the organization to the total society, and which may even determine its future existence. Similar contacts or information at levels below the president and sometimes his immediate staff have much less significance, since it then does not enter into the fundamental decisions which flow from the top down. Thus, while it may be of vital importance for the top to be well informed and well integrated into groups at their own level, it is not especially important to lower levels, and as a rule their attention is directed inward toward the details of the company rather than outward to the external world.

Maintaining Equilibrium

Another major concern of the top executive is that of maintaining an effective equilibrium and balance within the

company. One of his aims is to develop an organization which functions smoothly with little friction, which has an adequate equilibrium such that the company can sell its products at a profit, and which is sufficiently stable that it will function with a minimum of attention from him. When he has such a situation, he can devote his energies to other things and especially to relations with the outside world without worrying over the details within the walls. Probably almost every president longs to have just such an organization, and probably few of them attain it.

The Big Boss must continually concern himself, too, with keeping what he considers a proper balance of all the parts of the structure. Since every organization within the company is concerned primarily with its own function, each constantly acts as a pressure group demanding that its point of view and ideas be given more consideration, that things which hamper its activities be changed, that other organizations give way to it, that it be expanded or improved so that it can do a better job. Thus the accounting organization will be in love with its own theories and systems, will want to have better methods, more records, closer controls, and will frequently feel that all other activities should be subordinated to its routines. To other organizations it may appear that the accountants think the business is being run for their own exclusive benefit. In the same way, however, the engineers seek to improve and expand their activities, seek more authority and control, and try to subordinate the shop to their ideas. The personnel organization struggles to build up its functions too, and so does every other organization and every segment of them. The man on top has constantly to be judging the total situation. He must decide just where to limit the functions; he must decide on size and cost for each, balance the demands for control and authority, and not let one take over the place to the detriment of the company as a whole.

As part of the pressures from the different segments, there are also frequent frictions and conflicts between them, many of

which are carried up to the top executive for settlement. Thus he must not only try to decide on and maintain the proper balance among the segments, but he must also maintain harmony and co-operation among them. All too often these conflicts between superintendents are communicated to lower levels and thus increase the friction and instability of the organization as a whole. For this reason it is extremely important that the president pull together his top executives into a smooth-working, co-operative group.

Keeping in Touch with the Company

Although much of the top executive's attention is focused outward, it is still important for him to keep well informed about how things are going in the concern. For one thing, it is important for his own sense of security, since, if he feels any doubt about the way the organization is functioning, he develops anxieties which harm his relations with his subordinates. Also, if he is to be able to make proper decisions, to settle conflicts, and generally to function properly, it is necessary for him to have adequate information. To do this he relies on both formal reports, such as costs reports, and on verbal communication from his staff. All reports, especially the highly formalized cost reports and production records, present quite a problem in interpretation, since they are extremely oversimplified condensations of very complex data; and to know what they mean requires a detailed knowledge of the work and all conditions which might affect it. In fact, a great deal of the verbal communication of subordinates usually has to do with the interpretation of these formal, written communications. In their efforts to be informed, therefore, the top executives are constantly asking their subordinates for reports covering many types of activities.

Top management in general is always interested in raising the organization to new levels of performance. They like to see new records set for output, quality, cost reduction, and so on, and are frequently trying to work out new methods for produc-

ing such improvements. They are constantly interested in learning of new incentive systems, or new technical developments, or better control methods which can be used to produce these results. Also they are constantly using the various reports as a basis for stimulating performance. Thus nearly every plant has certain reports which lower levels think of as a "batting average" or "score card," since top management uses these figures as a method of comparison between organizations. By such comparisons the president often attempts to develop competition between units and to keep them all trying to improve.

Besides trying to improve performance by putting pressure on the organizations, management also seeks improvement through changes in organization, personnel, control methods, and so on. Many internal changes, too, grow out of the need to adapt the organization to changes in the outside world. In many cases management faces the problem both of deciding what changes will make a more effective organization and of handling the change in such a way that it will not cause serious disturbance in the organization. For example, a certain change in organization which appeared to be an improvement might so disturb the supervisors as to ruin the morale and efficiency of the entire group. For that reason top management must constantly anticipate the results of even the simplest changes, and attempt to take whatever actions may be necessary in order to make the changes successful.

Top Management and the Workers

It is clear that as you move upward in the structure the frequency of interaction with the workers decreases. In fact, it drops off sharply above the department chief level simply because there is little opportunity for those located away from the shop to have casual contact with the workers. Of course, many executives make a point of chatting with some of the workers whenever they visit the shops, but actually such contacts are apt to be infrequent and limited to only a small portion of the workers. The president who walks through the

shop every day and speaks to a few of the old-timers may feel that he is keeping in touch. Actually such contacts are usually somewhat artificial and rarely are extended to new workers. Certainly in any plant with several hundred workers, it becomes impossible for the president to spend the time necessary to really maintain contact with all the workers. This means that his knowledge of the attitude of the workers is based principally upon what other people say it is.

In spite of the little interaction, or perhaps because of it, the workers often look to top management as being fair-minded and sympathetic. In part this seems to arise out of the fact that a worker often receives a sympathetic hearing and gets action when he does approach the man at the top with a request or complaint. If Joe, with twenty years of service, screws up enough courage to go to the Big Boss and complain that he thinks it is not fair to give all the better jobs to new men without giving him a chance, the Big Boss is likely to think only of Joe and the way Joe feels without knowing the factors in the situation which made the foreman decide not to put Joe on the job he wants. Even if he realizes that there may be more than meets the eye, he can be friendly and soothing and say that he will talk to Joe's foreman about it. And Joe goes away feeling that the Big Boss is certainly a fine man. Furthermore, when the executive asks about the case, the foreman may either give Joe the chance he wants, in which case the Big Boss gets the credit; or the foreman may show why it can not be done, in which case the foreman gets the blame from Joe. This sort of thing does not happen often, of course; individual workers only rarely step out of bounds to take their troubles to the president, or to the plant manager, or even to the superintendent or division chief. If many such things were placed in the Big Boss's lap, he would probably be forced into the position of backing up his foremen and would no longer be thought of as such a fine man.

In order to retain some contact with the worker, and especially to provide a channel for complaints, many top executives

maintain what is referred to as an "open-door policy." This merely means that they announce that they will talk to anyone in the organization at any time, that any worker can come up and see them about anything without asking permission to do it. While the executives are sincere in their attitude of wanting workers to come to them with complaints, unfortunately such a device does not work. In the first place, the fact that the worker has to take the initiative, that he has to go out of his accustomed environment into the office and approach the Big Boss, blocks such action except under very exceptional circumstances. Usually a worker has to be really "burnt up" about something and has to have reached the point where he feels he is ready to risk anything to get a hearing before he takes such a step. And with the men at the very top, who have secretaries to protect them from informal contacts, the barriers are even greater. Of course, such a policy may result in occasional workers getting through to see an executive, which gives him a feeling of really being available to the workers, and of being in touch with what is going on. If he would only note how few such contacts he has in any given month, however, and consider how many workers there are, he will realize that any belief that the open-door policy really works is more wishful thinking than actual fact.

CHAPTER IV

SEGMENTATION OF THE STRUCTURE

PATTERNS OF INTERACTION

When we speak of a factory as a system of human relations, we mean in part that the individuals in the system are brought together into frequent interaction with each other. This interaction is not a matter of random contacts, but to a large extent has a definite pattern and may even be a habitual routine. Thus every person has a fairly definite pattern of interactions which relate him to certain others in the structure. Contacts outside of this pattern are generally infrequent and limited. Of course, much of the interaction is determined by the work itself, as, for example, the contacts between superior and subordinate for the purpose of giving instructions or communications regarding the work, or contacts between helper and machinist as a result of their working together. On the other hand, there are innumerable contacts which are not directly necessary to the work, such as morning greetings, chatting about outside affairs, joking and horseplay, gossiping about what goes on around the plant. These all go to complete the pattern of daily contacts and interaction which help make the factory an integrated social system.

When we look at all the human relations in a factory, we see that each person fits into a pattern in which he has a lot of contact with a few people, a little contact with some more people, and practically nothing at all to do with most of the others in the plant. In other words, people fit together into groups. Within a group there is a lot of interaction, and between groups there is little. Thus we can think of any organization as being broken up into a myriad of groups of workers, some large, some small, some following formal organizational lines, some groupings of people who work together every day; some groups-within-groups, some embracing a whole plant division of workers. An individual usually has some feeling of belonging or identification with the group or groups into which

he fits. He may hold attitudes of antagonism or friendliness toward certain other groups, or he may express beliefs and sentiments which are common to his group with regard to the work, the company, or anything else in the work environment. Thus we find that much of the work behavior of the individual is an expression of his place in the group or groups to which he belongs.

These groups are not all clearly defined or separated from one another by any means, and there is a great deal of overlapping. For example, the six girls who work side by side on the assembly conveyor form a work group, and four of them may be a social clique who get together outside of the factory. At the same time they all probably have a strong feeling of belonging to the department as a whole and have only very limited contacts with people in other departments. Going still farther, they all probably feel themselves members of a still larger group composed of all shop workers as opposed to office workers.

Formal Organizations

Study of the groupings, lines of cleavage, and patterns of interaction in most organizations shows that the formal organization of a factory into divisions, departments, and so on, is itself the basis for many of the groupings. Consider the typical organization chart of a small plant presented earlier (Fig. 2). Here we have seen that the organizational pyramid is sliced vertically into groups which in general are functionally different. We have the production or manufacturing organization which runs the shop and produces the goods, the accounting or cost control organization that keeps the books, the engineering organization which develops new products or processes and helps to make them work. In general the manufacturing organization is thought of as having the basic function, since obviously the production of goods is the primary activity of any factory. The other organizations are thought of as supplementary to the manufacturing organization, although necessary to the

proper functioning of the entire factory. In many cases the manufacturing organization is referred to as the shop organization or "the line,"¹ while the others are called "staff" and "control" organizations.

Examination of the various functions shows that some organizations are primarily concerned with gathering certain types of information and communicating it to the top levels. This is especially true of the accounting or cost control organizations which concern themselves with keeping track of the costs of running the business. They devise methods by means of which data on costs are assembled and presented to all levels of management, and they operate the organization by means of which the information is collected and prepared for presentation. Other organizations are more concerned with helping the shop to function more effectively. This is typical of the engineering organization which is concerned with helping the shop to solve technical problems in manufacturing processes, to devise better methods, and so on. Such organizations have a relation with the shop which is primarily one of advising on special technical matters or giving the shop special services. In general personnel organizations also have this type of staff relationship with the line organizations.

In talking to the members of each division or organization it is seen that each member has feelings of identification with his own particular division, usually has a high degree of interaction with his fellow-members as compared with members of other divisions, and may express fairly uniform attitudes toward the functions and behavior of the members of others. In many cases well-developed patterns of antagonism are found between such major divisions, with each being very critical of the others and very defensive of their own organization. Generally there is a sharp cleavage between the staff and line organizations growing out of their difference in function.

¹To avoid confusion it should be noted that "the line" used in this sense is merely another name for the manufacturing organization. It does not refer to the "line of authority," the chain of man-boss relations, which appears in every organization.

Within each of the larger organizations, too, there are further subdivisions which in turn are groups. The maintenance department, for example, feels itself different and separate from either production or inspection, and usually has pretty definite attitudes toward these other groups, although all are part of the production division. At this level in the organization there is apt to be conflict between the production and inspection departments arising out of the fact that inspection must pass on the work of the production department and decide whether it is acceptable or not. This frequently puts inspectors in the role of critic, and nobody loves his critics.

In one small factory some of these conflicts, antagonisms, and cleavages along organizational lines were observed in extreme form. An observer described the factory and some of its groups and discords as follows:

The organization described is one that has grown over a long period from a small beginning to a present group of about 400 employees. . . .

There are several vice-presidents in charge of departments and some men heading up smaller departments who have not yet been given any title. . . . The many departments making up the organization are like separate nations, the department executives standing against each other, demanding more in the way of salaries for their people, more in the way of service from other departments. This causes friction and rivalry between heads of departments and constant problems for the office manager and personnel director. . . .

Mr. K. is a vice-president in charge of the largest department—65 men and women. He does not seem to consider that he is vice-president for the whole organization, his department is all that matters. His people are higher paid than those in other departments. He thinks the service departments, typing, dictaphone, filing, mailing, etc., operate for his benefit alone, and if their results do not suit him, he does not hesitate to tell them so in no uncertain terms. The result is that there are really two organizations—K's department and the rest of the office. To illustrate, this year his 65 people are having their Christmas Party on the twentieth by themselves, and all the other departments—300 people—are having theirs on the twenty-second. Mr. K. explained "Mr. X. [the president] knew I wanted a

separate party, so he didn't insist on a general office party." The office manager commented "K could sell X a gold brick any day."

Then there is the little vice-president who started as an office boy forty years ago. Great rivalry exists between this one and Mr. K. as to whose department makes the most money, which is closest to Mr. X., etc. For weeks they are not on speaking terms, and the slightest concession from Mr. X. to either of them is likely to start another war.

Even when conflicts and antagonisms do not actually exist, lines of cleavage tend to develop between organizations, so that their members remain as distinct groups. For example, in one instance two separate organizations each occupied half of a large room. In the center of the room members of each organization were seated back to back at adjacent rows of desks only a few feet apart (Fig. 6). In spite of the physical proximity, there was very little interaction between these individuals beyond a polite good morning or occasional comment. Almost

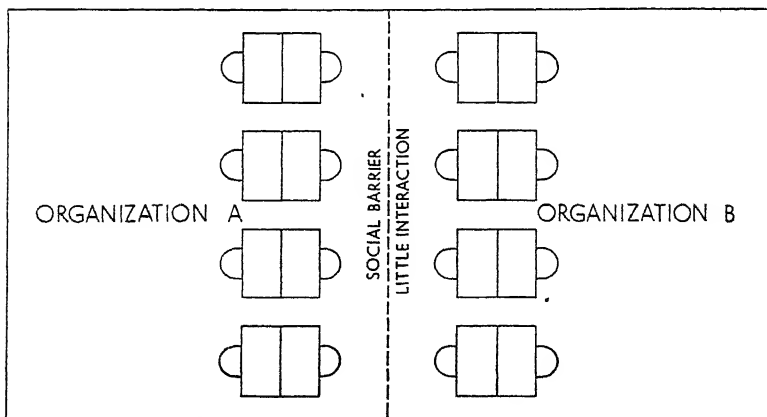


Figure 6. Floor Plan of a Work Room

never were there any long conversations or gatherings between members of the two groups. Within each group, on the other hand, there was a great deal of interaction both on the basis of the work and for purely social conversation. In this case it was apparent that the formal organization itself set up a wall

between the two groups in spite of the fact that there was no apparent feeling of conflict, antagonism, or defensiveness. Furthermore, there was nothing in the attitudes of the superiors in either organization to prevent them from mingling. There seemed to be merely a distinct feeling of indifference of the members of each organization toward the others with the result that there was very little interaction of any sort.

When there is conflict or competition between supervisors or superiors in different organizations, as for example in the case of the vice-presidents described above, the barriers between the members at the lower levels are strengthened. In such cases subordinates tend to have feelings of anxiety over any contacts with the other organization. They wonder what their boss will think if he sees them talking to someone from the other group; they avoid social contacts which might be observed by the superiors; or they feel it necessary to explain any such contacts to the boss. The result of this is to limit all forms of interaction and isolate the groups from each other even though they may be seated almost side by side.

Cliques

Within the non-supervisory group, too, in any organization there are forces acting to split it into smaller groups. Often such lines of cleavage may follow functional lines, as in the case of a clerical organization in which typists formed one group and file clerks another. In one study, by Roethlisberger and Dickson, of fourteen men in a small work group, it was found that the group was divided into two cliques. This was described as follows: ²

On the basis of the material just reviewed some conclusions can now be drawn as to the informal organization of this group of workmen. In the first place, it is quite apparent that the question raised at the beginning of the preceding section must be answered in the negative: these people were not integrated on the basis of occupation; they did not form occupational cliques. In the second place, it is

²Roethlisberger and Dickson, *Management and the Worker*, pp. 508-10.

equally apparent that there did exist certain configurations of relations in this group. With one exception, every record examined seemed to tell something about these configurations. Whether the investigators looked at games, job trading, quarreling over the windows, or friendships and antagonisms, two groups seemed to stand out. One of these groups was located toward the front of the room, and the other toward the back. "The group in front" and "the group in back" were common terms of designation among the workmen themselves. The first of these groups will be designated as clique A, the second, the group toward the rear of the room, as clique B.

What was the membership of these two cliques? This question can be answered only approximately. Clique A included W1, W3, W4, S1, I1, and clique B included W7, W8, W9, and S4. W5, S2, and I3 were outside either clique. With W2 and W6, however, the situation was not so clear. W2 participated in the games of clique A, but beyond this the similarity of his behavior to theirs ceased. He entered very little into their conversation and tended to isolate himself from them. Much of his behavior suggested that he did not feel his position in the group was secure. He was the only wireman in soldering unit A who traded jobs with S4, the solderman in clique B, and he traded jobs with his own solderman more than anyone else. In so far as the social function of job trading was to differentiate wiremen from soldermen, this could be interpreted as meaning that W2 felt rather keenly the necessity of constantly emphasizing his position by subordinating the soldermen. Taking all the evidence into consideration, then, it may be concluded that W2 was not a bona fide member of clique A. W6 tended to participate in clique B. He was continually "horsing around" with the selector wireman and had relatively little to do with the members of clique A. That he was not entirely accepted in clique B was shown in many ways, chief of which was the way in which clique B co-operated in resisting his attempts to dominate anyone in their group. Yet he participated in clique B much more than W2 did in clique A. It may be concluded that although W6 tended to participate in clique B, he was still in many ways an outsider.

As a means of summarizing the results of this inquiry, Figure 45 [Figure 7] has been prepared to represent diagrammatically the internal organization of the observation group. The soldering units into which the members of the groups were divided are shown by

the three rectangles. The two large circles demarcate the two cliques. There were three individuals, I3, W5, and S2, who were clearly outside either clique.³ The line around W6 has been made to intersect

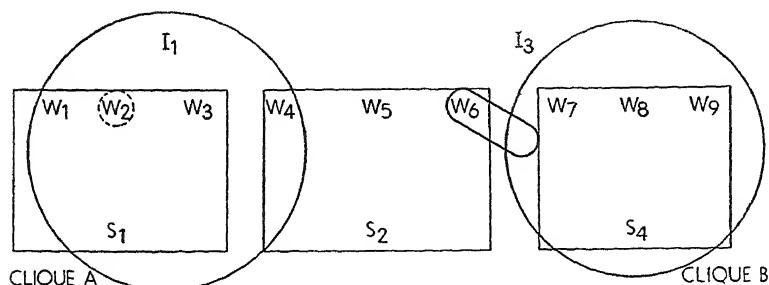


Figure 7. "The Internal Organization of the Group"
"Bank Wiring Observation Room"

that of clique B to indicate his partial participation in it. The instability of W2's position is indicated by the broken circle around his number.

That the members of clique A regarded themselves as superior to clique B was indicated in many ways. Clique A did or refrained from doing things which were done by clique B. They did not trade jobs nearly so much, and on the whole they did not enter into the controversies about the windows. Clique A engaged in games of chance, whereas clique B engaged often in "binging." Both groups purchased candy from the Club store, but purchases were made separately and neither clique shared with the other. Clique A bought candy in small quantities, whereas clique B bought a less expensive kind in such large quantities that W9 one time became ill from

³"Perhaps a word of caution is necessary here. When it is said that this group was divided into two cliques and that certain people were outside either clique, it does not mean that there was no solidarity between the two cliques or between the cliques and the outsiders. There is always the danger in examining small groups extensively, of overemphasizing differentiating factors. Internal solidarity thus appears to be lacking. That this group, as a whole, did have very strong sentiment in common has already been shown in discussing their attitudes toward output and will be brought out more clearly in the next chapters. It should also be said that position in the group is not so static as one might assume from this diagram. Had the study continued longer, membership in the cliques might have shifted. Also, if the group had been larger, or if the group had been allowed to remain in the regular department, it is quite probable that the people who appear as outsiders here would have formed cliques with others who had similar sentiments." *Ibid.*, p. 510, footnote

eating too much. Clique A argued more and indulged in less noise and horseplay than clique B. The members of clique A felt that their conversations were on a higher plane than those which went on in clique B; as W4 said, "We talk about things of some importance."

Horizontal Cleavage

In many cases, too, we see horizontal lines of cleavage between the vertical levels within an organization. The most common point of cleavage of this sort is between workers and supervisors. This separates them into two antagonistic groups, with the workers feeling that it is necessary for them to unite in defense against excessively critical or demanding foremen or other supervisors. This defensive attitude of the workers causes them to avoid contacts and interaction with their superiors, makes them withhold information, cover up mistakes, restrict output, and devise a variety of protective measures. Foremen usually respond to such behavior by critical attitudes, avoiding social conversation, and restricting contacts to those required by the work. In such cases we find contacts are kept at the "strictly business" level, and then they are filled with feelings of suspicion and criticism so that the contacts are uncomfortable for both sides. Such horizontal cleavages are not, however, confined to that level, but may occur at any point in the hierarchy. In some cases foremen group themselves with the workers in opposition to higher levels. A striking instance of this was observed in the following case:

Department chief A was new to the organization, having replaced a man who had been very popular with both the foremen and the workers. A was very hardboiled in his manner, critical of the way the department was running and wanted to make a lot of changes. Foremen B and C had had long experience in the department, worked together well, and were popular with the men. The department had been running very smoothly, and they objected to A's criticisms and rebelled at the changes. There soon developed open friction with A in opposition to B and C.

D was a production control man reporting to the production control organization, but handling the planning and scheduling of work for this department. He was not of supervisory rank, but his particular job gave him status well above the ordinary office worker. Because of his job, he was well informed as to how work was progressing in the department. Also he had once reported to A when A had been in charge of a production control department.

As friction developed between A and his foremen, interaction and communication diminished. The foremen admitted that they were always afraid of A's criticism and avoided him whenever possible. One of them said: "If he comes around, we find some excuse to be busy somewhere else. If he is at his desk, we stay out on the floor; if he is in one end of the department, we go to the other end. We never tell him anything unless he asks us and try never to discuss the work with him.

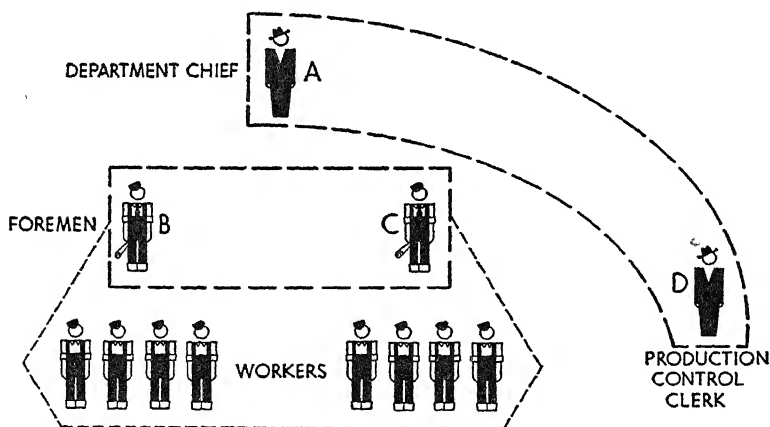


Figure 8. An Example of Horizontal Cleavage

We all went to a department party the other night, and if we were at the bar and he would come up, we would walk away."

As this blockage developed, A turned more and more to D as a source of information about the department. The foremen in turn reacted against D who, they felt, was carrying tales to

A about the department and was therefore not to be trusted. They also felt that D was trying to gain favor in the hopes of being promoted to C's job, since A had threatened to get rid of C if he failed to do a satisfactory job. As a result they would have nothing to do with D beyond what was necessary for the job. Thus the department was split into two antagonistic groups, A and D who were friendly and working together, and B and C who worked together and were friendly with each other but would have nothing to do with A and D. The workers were not directly involved, but they shared the antagonism toward A and were therefore loosely grouped with B and C whom they liked and trusted (Fig. 8).

STAFF ORGANIZATIONS

Engineering and personnel divisions are usually called staff organizations as opposed to the line (manufacturing or production) or control (accounting and/or cost control) organizations (Fig. 3). In general, the role of staff organizations is that of aiding the line to function better. Their members are advisors, experts from outside the immediate shop organization, who come in either when difficulties arise or when changes are contemplated. However valuable and necessary they may be, therefore, they are not the ones who ultimately have the responsibility for getting the work out. And as a rule, the more efficient the shop organization and the better it handles its own problems, the less need there is for the technical staff. Such a situation almost inevitably leads to friction between staff and line organizations.

Each staff organization is prone to see the work of the shop in terms of its own special functions and to be very critical of any failure in the shop to follow their suggestions or directions. The engineer has an eye out for any possible improvement in equipment or methods, and complains that the shop foremen and workers are ignorant and stupid and uncooperative about such changes. The personnel man is always on the watch for improper treatment of employees, and com-

plains, no doubt with some justification, that shop foremen are indifferent to the workers or object to following correct practices in hiring, firing, and promotion. Thus each directs his attention to only a limited aspect of shop activities, and each is looking for trouble or chances for improvement, since it is largely through such changes that he justifies his existence.

People in the shop, on the other hand, feel, with equal justification, that the staff members are all riding their own special interests, that they are more concerned with making a showing personally than with helping to get the work done, that they do not realize the pressure the shop is under, and all in all that they are not as smart as they think they are. The shop foreman has to deal with the job as a whole. He has to get the work out; and by the way, he has to struggle with technical difficulties, enforce safety rules, and take into account dozens of other factors in everything he does. It is not surprising that he often resists suggestions from staff members and is annoyed when they seem to expect him to drop everything else when one of their specialists comes around.

Engineers and the Shop

Between the engineering organization and the shop, antagonism is especially common. The engineers usually look down on the shop as being of lower status, uneducated, and "set in their ways"; while the shop considers the engineers too theoretical, filled with book-learning, very impractical, and altogether obnoxious with their superior airs. When the engineers have the responsibility for developing better products or manufacturing methods, they are in the position of imposing changes on the shop almost constantly. Every time they make any improvement, it is likely to mean that the shop has to learn new work habits or change its accustomed routines, and the established status systems and systems of interaction between workers may be upset. For example, an improvement in method which would eliminate certain skilled jobs would mean that some workers would have to change to other jobs

perhaps at lower pay, and at the same time it might remove the goal that some of the younger men were working toward. Another change might result in new and tighter rates, which would mean either harder work or lower earnings for the group.

The various functions of the engineer all put him in a position superior to the shop people. He is either proposing changes which may be rammed down their throats whether they like it or not, or he is finding things wrong with the way they do their job, or he comes in with his superior knowledge to straighten things out that have gone wrong. Even if he is acting as trouble-shooter, they would much rather handle the problems themselves than call him in, since they feel that too much reliance on him may be interpreted by their bosses as meaning that they can not handle their jobs. (An engineer who sits around waiting for the line supervisors to call on him for help is usually not kept very busy.)

We do not mean to imply that there is always conflict and antagonism between engineers and the shop, because in many instances there are very cordial and co-operative relations. In any shop group, however, there are innumerable tales, or we might say myths, illustrating the ignorance and impracticality of engineers, and frequent complaints about the new ideas the engineers dream up. On the other hand, every group of engineers has its own tales about the stubbornness and lack of co-operation in the shop. There is so much of this that we may conclude that there is inherent in the relation between an engineering organization and a shop organization a basic conflict, so that members of each group identify with their fellows and are opposed to the other group.

Not just with engineers but in their relations with staff experts generally, the shop workers and foremen are usually on guard. Even when maintaining friendly and co-operative attitudes, they are often on the alert to protect themselves against undesirable changes and resent any attitude of superiority. In many cases there is open hostility toward a staff man

which shows itself in a negative attitude toward all of his suggestions, covering up anything which he might criticize, or finding reasons why they cannot co-operate. Sometimes the resistance to him takes the form of putting off the execution of any of his ideas, of not wanting to try things out, or of refusing to do anything except under direct orders from their superiors. At best, a staff man is in a difficult position. To get things done, he must always work through the shop organization, and especially through the foremen, who are the ones to put his ideas into practice. And no matter how good his ideas may be, their success or failure often hangs on the willingness and ability of the shop foremen and workers to carry them out in actual practice. There are, in fact, plenty of cases in which sound ideas failed because of the indifference or opposition of the shop organization. And when he meets with active opposition, the staff man's position becomes even more difficult. He often feels blocked in everything he attempts; everything moves terribly slowly; and he finds himself in an agony of frustration.

An Outsider in the Shop

Another factor which adds to his difficulties is his position as an outsider in the shop organization. Because of this he is always under suspicion in the shop. If he is coming right into the work situation, watching the work and the workers, in touch with what is going on, he is a potential threat to the shop, since he provides a channel of communication upward which is not controlled by the line. As a part of a staff organization, he can effectively short-circuit the line and carry criticisms of the shop organization clear up to the top of the structure without the knowledge of the line. This is a very real problem to the staff specialist, too, because he must not only get his ideas across to the shop, but must keep his own boss informed of his activities and show what a good job he is doing. This means that he *has* to report on the problems of the shop to show how he is spending his time. Inevitably,

then, he becomes a channel through which shop problems are passed up through the structure and are short-circuiting the line. For example, a foreman finds that a certain process has gone wrong and he calls in an engineer to help straighten it out. The difficulty seems to lie in some short-cuts which the workers have been trying to get away with, and the foreman would hate to have his boss find it out, as he would be blamed for laxness in his supervision. So the foreman says nothing up the line and hopes that he can get by. The engineer, however, tells his boss what he has been doing. They discuss the cause of the difficulty, and his boss complains that they are spending too much time fixing up things that would never happen if the shop foreman followed the engineering instructions. The next day, in talking to the superintendent of engineering, he uses the incident as an illustration of the kinds of unnecessary difficulties they have to deal with. The superintendent of engineering, when lunching with the manufacturing superintendent, asks him why he cannot make the foremen follow instructions, and recounts the incident. The manufacturing superintendent then puts his subordinates "on the pan," first for letting such a thing happen, and second for not keeping their superiors informed on what is going on so that he has to learn about his own job from outsiders. Such a situation seems to justify shop suspicion of staff experts and shows just how much of a threat to the shop they may be.

Judging Staff People

The problem of justifying their existence, of showing that the work they are doing is actually worth the expense, is often a serious problem, especially with large staff organizations. The individual members, as well as the organization as a whole, often show concern as to how management evaluates the organization or how the superiors judge the individual. An engineering organization may be judged by the number and value of the improvements they introduce, or by the number of problems they solve. A safety organization may be

judged by the decrease in accidents. And since much of the showing they make depends upon the acceptance and co-operation of the shop organization, they are apt to feel that their success is blocked by the indifference and obstinacy of the shop. In some cases the relations with the shop are seriously affected by the manner in which the staff people are judged either by their immediate superiors or by top management. For example, an engineer whose job is evaluated on the basis of the improvements in shop equipment and methods which he develops may find that he is competing with shop workers or foremen. Engineers are often accused of stealing bright ideas from shop people and presenting them as their own; and engineers say that the shop people do not have the technical knowledge to make even a really good idea work, and that their ideas would never amount to anything without the engineers. In one instance a shop worker developed a simple but important improvement, submitted it through the plant suggestion box, and received considerable recognition. The engineer who had been assigned to developmental work in that department was called in by his superiors and bawled out for not making the improvement himself. As he told it to a friend, "I was told that it was my job to make these improvements, and I shouldn't let the shop have all these bright ideas. It made our organization look bad, especially when such obvious improvements got by us." Inevitably such attitudes lead to competition rather than co-operation.

Desire for More Authority

Because of these conditions, the staff experts are apt to feel that they should have more power and authority to force the shop to accept their ideas or to co-operate in their work. They are also prone to react to resistance by "going up the line" with complaints and demands for co-operation. Almost every staff man at times dreams of being able to demand the co-operation of the shop foremen and workers. And almost every one has at times been guilty of going over the heads of the shop

foremen with complaints and criticisms. Unfortunately, there is no authority that can force co-operation, and any such attempts to force it tend to increase the difficulties. An example of this was seen in the case of a very unpopular safety engineer who always had a very authoritative manner toward the shop foreman. He would inspect a department and list everything which he could find wrong, and then, instead of taking it up with the foremen and letting them straighten things out, he would go higher up and report on the terrible conditions. He himself was always complaining about the unco-operative attitude of the shop. He complained that there had to be a club over the foremen to get the safety rules enforced, and that he could not understand why management did not back him up more. As a result the entire shop organization disliked him. They did not want to have him around; they never asked his advice or told him anything. On one occasion he brought a division chief down to inspect the shop on a Saturday morning when the place was shut down and the foremen were not present. Apparently the division chief felt that he could not refuse, so he accompanied the safety man who listed every instance of poor housekeeping, safety hazards, improper machine guards, and so on. On Monday morning the division chief had a meeting of his department chiefs and foremen and told them of this inspection. The entire group was furious, even though the division chief told them that he understood the situation and was not criticizing them, that he was just cautioning them to try to improve conditions before they all got in trouble. They felt very strongly that the safety man had been snooping behind their backs, and had not given them a chance either to correct or to justify the conditions before calling in the division chief.

While the desire for more authority is especially strong at the lower levels of the staff organization where they are in direct contact with the shop, there are similar feelings at all levels. There is a tendency, therefore, not only on the part of the individual experts but of the whole organization, to be

pressing management constantly for more and more authority and power. Then, too, since each organization is concentrating on its own specialty, they are constantly struggling to increase their effectiveness in their own field. This often results in a tendency for each staff group to try to increase its size, to add more and more specialists, and to impose more and more of their point of view upon the entire company. This leads to a lot of competition between staff groups, even though they have quite different functions. Each is apt to be critical of the others, skeptical of their value, and jealous of any group which seems to be getting unusual recognition or growing rapidly.

Internal Structure of Staff

In their internal structure the staff organizations tend to be quite different from the ordinary shop organization. Even in very large plants the staff organizations are much smaller than the shop units and usually have a shorter supervisory hierarchy. Individual engineers, for example, may report directly to a department chief without the intervening supervisory level, or the department chief may report directly to the plant manager. Furthermore, the number of individuals reporting to any one department head are much fewer than in the shop, so that each individual has much more contact with his immediate superiors and even with higher levels. This has the effect of bringing the individuals closer to the higher supervisory levels, often develops feelings of being close to management and identifying with management and its objectives, and generally adds to their feelings of superiority.

Because of the nature of their work, the staff men are apt to have more formal education than people at comparable levels in the shop organization. They often have college education and even advanced training, and are generally looked upon as being superior in intellect to the foremen and workers. The need for special technical training means that people are usually recruited for staff jobs from outside the plant rather

than from the shops. As a result, it does not provide a channel through which the shop people can rise from the ranks. This means that the staff organizations are differentiated from the shop not only by their functions but also by the kind of people who are selected to perform these functions.

This selection process tends to bring in at the bottom of the staff organizations a group of young college graduates, often with degrees in engineering or science, thoroughly drilled in the logics and point of view of their particular field. These newcomers usually run into difficulties in their relations with the shop. There the young engineers, for example, often fresh out of college, who are in constant contact with the shop workers and supervisors and who try to give them technical assistance. And there are the young personnel men, often without actual factory experience, who try to tell the old-time shop foremen how to handle personnel problems. Being young and ambitious to make a showing and get ahead, these young experts tend to become very aggressive toward shop people, to be critical, and to indulge in pleasant day dreams of having the authority to "tell that stubborn old so-and-so in charge of the X Department just what he has to do and no back talk." Inevitably the experienced shop people look upon these as not-yet-dry-behind-the-ears youngsters, long on book-learning and short on judgment, who are more interference than help. In their turn, the young people feel constantly frustrated in their efforts to put their knowledge to use; and in their efforts to get the shop to change its ways, they feel that they are beating their heads against a stone wall. They look upon themselves, furthermore, as future executives, as the cream which is bound to rise to the top. This tends to strengthen their feeling of being part of management and their acceptance of management's aims and point of view. At the same time it makes them impatient with the shop people, those "unintelligent" people who do not accept the ideas and reasoning which to the young experts are so clear as to be obvious. They are often impatient, too, with the slow processes

of advancement and part of their feelings of frustration are translated into antagonism toward the shop organizations which block their ideas and prevent their getting suitable recognition.

In some staff organizations which have been well established over a long period of time, there may be two groups of people at the lower levels. One is a group of older people who have been in the organization a long time but who have no college training. Often these people have been brought in from the shop in the early development of the staff organization because of their practical knowledge of shop work. They may be experienced mechanics, tool and die makers, or others with extensive practical knowledge and skill. Their limited technical training, however, in many cases serves as a barrier to further advancement, and they remain for years at the lower levels in the staff jobs. The other group is composed of young people like those just described above, highly trained specialists, often just out of college, who start at the same level as the old-timers. They usually advance rapidly because of their education. These two groups are generally mutually antagonistic and split the organization in two. The non-college old-timers feel that their practical knowledge is not given adequate recognition, and the college group are scornful and impatient of them because "they don't know anything and haven't gotten anywhere." The older group tends to be antagonistic to management, or at least toward the top of the staff organizations, and does not share in the feelings of identification with management and acceptance of its logics to the same extent as the younger fellows. Often they identify much more with the shop and sympathize with its general antagonism to "the young punks out of college who don't quite know what the score is."

CONTROL ORGANIZATIONS

Activities and Functions

Accounting or cost control, rate-setting, and inspection comprise another group, which may be thought of as control or-

ganizations. Except in large concerns these are not usually set up as three separate and distinct organizations. On the basis of their functions, however, we shall discuss them here as three types of control systems, without regard to their exact positions in various plant organizations.⁴ These control organizations do not actually control operations in the shop directly, but they supply the basis for management's evaluation and control of shop performance. The accounting or cost control organization, for example, is constantly checking up on the performance of the shop and reporting to higher executives about it. Management relies on these reports to judge how well the shop is performing in terms of production and costs. The piece-rate organization has the responsibility of setting the rates which serve as a control over labor costs and which are another standard by which management evaluates the shop.⁵ Inspection must pass on the quality of the products, and their reports serve as still another measure of shop performance.

All these various reports on costs, quality, performance, earnings, and so on serve to pull together in a highly condensed form certain information, concerning the way the shop is operating, for the use of higher supervisors and management. On the basis of their interpretations of these reports, management judges how things are going, puts pressure on the shop organizations, and makes decisions concerning shop activities. And the proper interpretation of such reports is one of the skills that executives must develop, since it is important for them to understand just what the figures mean in terms of the way the shop actually functions.

Anticipating Control Reports

Since it is evaluated largely on the basis of these reports, the shop is inevitably concerned about them, how they will be

⁴Almost invariably, even in small plants, there is an accounting system which is separate from the shop organization. Inspection, however, is usually part of the shop. Rate-setting usually comes under the accounting or engineering organizations, and only rarely achieves the status of a separate organization.

⁵The functions and problems of rate-setting organizations will be discussed in a later chapter on wage systems

interpreted, how management will react to them, and what the consequences will be. Shop supervisors want to be able to anticipate all such control reports. They want to know at least approximately what is going to go up the line, especially for those reports which are most used by management. The shop is also interested in understanding the methods by which the figures are gathered, so that they may keep alert for any errors and, when possible, control the figures themselves. In other words, the shop wants to know just what the reports will mean to them and how to beat the system. As we shall see in a later discussion of piece-rates, the foremen often tries to control the job in order to maintain straight-line earnings as a means of protecting himself from criticism or questions from above. The same is true of any other report which goes up the line; if it is used as a control report by management, if it is examined and questions asked about it, the foreman tries to see that only harmless figures go up. In the case of reports which go in on regular dates, for example, such as monthly reports, a foreman likes to know about where his department stands before the report is compiled, so that he can try to correct any adverse conditions. If a company is trying to cut down on raw material inventory and places great stress on monthly reports of raw material on hand by departments, then just before the inventory period each foreman starts keeping his own private check on raw materials and tries to reduce his stocks to a minimum. Once safely past that period he will let his stocks build up again.

If the foreman can anticipate any such reports, he can not only plan his work so that the figures will be what his superiors like, but in case of adverse changes or any conditions which might be questioned, he can prepare his answers safely in advance. Thus, if he sees that his group will show a drop in piece-work earnings which he cannot avoid, he will have his explanations prepared even before the earnings report is released. In many cases he not only prepares his story but passes it up to his boss, so that he in turn knows what to expect and

what answer to give. In fact it is considered very important that the foreman warn his boss of any important changes which will appear on any reports. This is then passed up the line for at least a few levels, so that when the big boss gets the report everybody is ready for his questions. In that way all levels can show that they are on top of their jobs and know what is going on in their organizations.

This need to anticipate the reports often leads to a lot of informal record-keeping on the part of the foremen. In some cases a foreman himself may keep a few records which give him the needed information, but on other jobs there may be so much work that he has a clerk just for this purpose. In one company where piece-work earnings reports were used as an important control, it was informally expected that the foremen pass on their estimates of the earnings for their groups a few days before the actual accounting figures were released. A study of this company showed that every foreman had some form of informal records, usually duplicating in a rough way the actual accounting records and requiring as much as the full time of one clerk for each department. In other words there were two sets of records of piece-work earnings, one the extremely accurate accounting figures and the other the rough records from which the foremen made their estimates. While the informal records seemed rather unnecessary and quite expensive, the foremen felt that they needed them in order both to control their groups and to warn their superiors as to what to expect at the end of the month. These needs are so great that there is probably no way to eliminate completely this kind of informal record-keeping.

Accounting and Cost Control

The systems of accounting and cost control arise directly out of the economic logics. These systems provide a method by means of which practically everything, the buildings, machines, tools, materials, labor, and so on, are reduced to a common denominator of dollars and cents. Thus they provide a

basis for comparison of the most diverse activities or for combining them in various ways. In effect they provide a means for adding horses and cows to bushels of oats and bales of hay, or for comparing one to another. Thus through a cost report, management can compare the performance of the department making heavy castings with that of the final assembly department, or it can combine them all into one report to show the performance of the entire plant for any given period. This seems rather obvious and is usually taken for granted, but back of all cost control lie a number of assumptions which have their effect upon the way people act on the job.

Because cost reports are frequently used as a sort of score sheet for the shop organization and its segments, the supervisors tend to run their jobs with one eye on these reports. If labor cost per unit of output appears on the reports, the foreman watches his labor costs; and as long as they stay within limits acceptable to higher management, he feels at ease; when they go beyond those limits, he tries to dig up an acceptable excuse. Thus such reports set the operating goals for the shop and set the standards of proper performance. As a result we see foremen and higher supervisors devoting their attention to meeting the requirements of the score sheet rather than to actually improving the job. As long as these requirements are met, they seem quite willing to coast along keeping everything stable. In fact we may conclude that the average shop organization tends to seek stability, to level off and hold everything steady, and does not have within itself the pressure to lift performance to higher levels. Top management, however, as we have seen, is always concerned with raising the level of performance, and uses the cost reports as a pressure device to stimulate the lower supervisors to this end. These supervisors in turn often react by working out devices to protect themselves from this pressure with a minimum of disturbance to the equilibrium of their organizations. For example, we see foremen juggling the records or shifting people around to cover up when one part of their job is "going in the hole."

Often the supervisors are not primarily concerned with doing the job the best or cheapest way but with doing it in the way that will look best on the reports.

Although cost reports are a useful tool for management, it must be remembered that they provide an oversimplified picture of what is going on. To have a report showing that the cost per unit of output has increased 1 per cent over the preceding month may provide management with something very concrete and simple with which to put pressure on the manufacturing organization. Nevertheless, behind such figures lie all the problems and difficulties with which the organization has to struggle, all the delays beyond their control as well as all their own mistakes in judgment. And if top management merely takes the cost reports as the sole measure of performance, and gives no consideration to all the difficulties which may arise, the lower levels feel unfairly treated. This is generally recognized by top management; they know that to interpret the reports properly and to be fair in their demands upon the shop, they must be able to read between the lines and not just take the reports at their face value. This usually means that they must have some acquaintance with the way the shop works and with the difficulties it faces and must keep informed as to changes in its situation.

Many companies use a budget system in which they make an estimate of the needs of each department and set up a budget based on these estimates. Thus they make an over-all estimate of the needs of the business and the funds to be spent during a period, and then distribute the funds to the various departments. This may be further broken down into details of the way in which the funds are to be spent, such as, so much for direct labor, so much for indirect labor, so much for materials, tools, repairs, and so on. Under such a system, and especially where there is a detailed breakdown of the budget, each department operates within a framework of anticipated expenditures which do not always fit changing conditions. When management readily approves variations from

the budget, this does not present much difficulty; but when it tries to adhere pretty closely to the budget, many problems arise. For example, if a punch press department has almost exhausted its monthly budget for tool repairs, it may be forced to delay necessary repairs until the next month. This often results in make-shift repairs by the department itself in order to save sending the tools to the regular tool room, or it may mean using tools beyond their period of efficient operation. This in turn may decrease the output for those tools or increase the defective parts. This may lower the earnings of the operator or cause him extra trouble with the job, which in turn annoys him since he can see no reason for not having the tools repaired when needed. Also such make-shifts often result in things being done in more expensive or less efficient ways, even though it does keep the budget looking right. In any case, having to subordinate the needs of the job to the needs of the cost control system is always annoying to the worker and the foremen, who are acutely aware of the inefficiency and waste of such practices.

While the whole system of cost control and its reports is a constant threat to the peace of mind of the shop supervisors, there is rarely open antagonism and conflict between the two organizations. The cost control procedures are highly systematized and reduced to simple routines of paper work, much of which is done by clerks. These systems depend very little upon personal contacts between foremen and accounting people for the collection of data, which frees them of one source of possible friction. As a result, because there is little personal interaction, there is much less friction between the shop and the accounting organization than between the shop and the average staff organization. In some cases, however, the way the cost control system is set up gives rise to friction between segments of the shop organization. For example, where there is strong emphasis upon scrap losses, there is always argument as to who is responsible. Often defective work in one department may not appear there but may cause work in

some other department at some later stage to be junked. In such cases there is always the argument as to who is actually responsible and to whom it should be charged. And each department is always suspecting the other of trying to do a little "chiseling" by passing on defective work rather than junking it when found, or by trying to pass the blame back to someone else. Thus it is often found that the particular cost control system, or the emphasis it places on various items, has far-reaching effects upon the attitudes of the workers and the relations between various departments.

Since the accounting and cost control system, especially in large plants, involves a great deal of routine clerical work, these organizations are usually larger than the staff organizations and often parallel the shop organization in number of levels. In the large accounting organizations where much of the work has been reduced to simple routine operations, no great skill or understanding of accounting methods is required of the clerks. In smaller organizations there is less routine work and even the clerical workers may need to have an understanding of the system as a whole. In either case the average clerical worker needs to know little beyond the mechanics of the accounting system itself.

The accounting organization offers opportunity for many of the younger people from worker families to move to the often-coveted white collar or office status. Many of the jobs can be handled by any alert high-school graduate, and others may require moderate skill at typing or operating business machines, such as comptometers, calculators, or adding machines. This makes it relatively simple for any ambitious youngster either to start directly in this work or to prepare for it through brief evening school courses. In the past the desire for these jobs has been so great that most accounting organizations, as well as most office work, has a starting rate no higher and sometimes even lower than the starting rate in the shop.

To the youngster with college education, however, especially if trained in accounting, the average accounting organization is

discouraging. If he comes into a large organization, he starts at low pay, is thrown into a lot of routine work which others with no college education can perform as well as he, and he feels that his talents are wasted. Furthermore, he is often working under supervisors who have little or no theoretical training but who have grown up in the organization and know its routines thoroughly. This gives him a feeling of isolation, of not having opportunity to display his learning and talents. A small organization is often more satisfactory, since it offers more variety of activity and more opportunity for contact with higher levels, which relieves some of the feeling of being completely lost in a huge organization.

Inspection

Inspection is another type of control which is also important to the shop and with which it has considerable contact. The inspector's job constantly puts him in the position of telling the shop what is wrong with its work. He points out mistakes and defects in the products, reports such mistakes to his superiors, and in a piece-work system he directly affects the pay envelope. Also in many plants his reports on quality are one of the control reports which top management watches closely and which are, therefore, a constant threat to the shop.

Because of these functions there is apt to be a sharp cleavage and considerable friction between inspection and the line organization. The workers and shop foremen rarely regard inspection as a friend; they are apt to be critical of the way it does its job, they argue over its standards, and disagree with many of its judgments. This is especially apparent when inspection involves the judgment of the inspector rather than precise standards of measurement. In such cases the shop workers and foremen are apt to complain that the inspector uses poor judgment, that he discards parts which to them appear perfectly adequate, or that he is trying to hold them to standards that are impossible to maintain. Of course, when inspection is primarily a matter of the inspector's judgment,

he can be tough or easy on the shop, and, unless they question every judgment, they have a hard time defending themselves. A case of this was described by a foreman of a finishing department who said:

We once had an inspector in here who was a terrible grouch and always made it as tough as possible. Once we had a job putting a baked enamel finish on some metal panels about five feet long and a 'foot wide. We would spray the enamel on one side, rack them up flat on a truck, and shove the truck into the baking oven. When they would come out this inspector would tilt each one up to the light, and if he would see even one dust speck, he would send it back, said the specifications called for perfectly smooth finish. Well, our spray room and oven weren't in too good shape and it was almost impossible to get one completely dust free. It was crazy to be so strict; it was only a protective enamel for an inside surface that was never seen, but this guy didn't care. Finally we got the engineers to look at the job and they told him it was good enough the way we were doing it

Inspectors often feel superior to shop workers and express attitudes of superiority, which increases the friction between the two groups. Most inspection people feel that they are always fighting with the shop in order to maintain the quality of the products and the reputation of the company. They feel that the shop people are only concerned with their own selfish interests and want to make a showing in output or earnings at the expense of quality, and that it is up to the inspectors to keep them in line. Furthermore, they often feel that the shop is not to be trusted but must always be watched with suspicion, attitudes which are often shared with other groups, such as safety engineers, cost control people, and rate setters

The shop cannot feel that they are through with any job until it has been passed by inspection, but once passed their responsibility is ended. In many cases, they feel no concern for their work beyond getting it past inspection. If inspection is lax and passing products that will not work, that is no concern of the shop and may even be their good fortune. If they can "pull a fast one" and sneak some defective parts past in-

spection, that may even be considered a good joke on inspection. As a result we often see considerable scheming by the workers and even foremen to beat inspection. When the quality reports are used by management for control, it becomes important for the shop to keep defective work down. One way to do this is to see that defective work does not go to inspection but that it is either repaired or junked before inspection sees it. Sometimes the department maintains its own informal inspection of the work either by the workers or by the foremen. For example, the foreman may make a rough check on the work either during processing, or before it goes to inspection, and if there seems to be a lot of defective work, he may go over the whole job carefully. Sometimes they will sort over a bad lot of parts and send only the good ones up to inspection. In these ways they can keep their workers on their toes with regard to quality and keep some control over their quality reports.

Under individual piece-work inspection has an important influence upon the earnings of the individual worker. The work of each individual must be counted and the inspector's records become part of the accounting routine by which the worker is paid. This tends to increase the possibilities of friction between the inspector and the individual worker and stimulates the worker to try to figure out ways of slipping poor work past inspection. The functions of piece-work as a wage system and the problems involved will be discussed in some detail in a later chapter.

If, as sometimes happens, the inspectors and shop workers are on friendly terms, the inspectors may help the shop make a good showing by turning back defective work without reporting it. In such cases the inspectors will call the workers' attention to any recurring errors, will send defective parts back for repairs or to be junked by the shop, or may even make slight repairs or readjustments themselves when they have time. These inspectors are always well liked by the shop and usually have little difficulty in getting the shop to accept their

judgment. In some cases this sort of alliance between workers and inspectors goes on even without the knowledge of the shop foreman and serves to protect not only the shop organization but also the individual worker from his boss. The extent to which such co-operation can flourish, however, is usually limited by the way the inspectors are judged by their own supervisors. In many cases the work of the inspector is judged by his reports of defectives found and by spot checking his work to see if defectives are getting past him. If he does not report any defectives, the assumption is either that he is not doing his work carefully or else that the shop is turning out such perfect work that it does not need inspection. If check inspections show that there are not any defectives, then they may decide either to do away with that inspection or put it on a sampling basis in which only so many pieces out of every lot are inspected. If they find the inspector has been working closely with the shop and turning back all the defectives without reporting them, they feel that he has somehow betrayed his own organization and superiors. In any event he has to report some defectives in order to keep his boss from looking too critically at the job he is doing.

In general, inspectors rank somewhat higher than shop workers, and inspection organizations as a whole have status superior to the shop organization. This probably arises partly out of the fact that the worker is in a sense directly subordinated by the person who checks his work and decides whether it is good or not. Also most inspection jobs are lighter and easier than the shop jobs so that the inspectors can dress like the office workers. Because of this superior status, inspection work often offers a chance for a minor degree of mobility from the shop. It does not ordinarily rank high enough to attract people with special training or with a desire for office status, however, since its work is done in shop location and to the office people it still ranks with the shop.

CHAPTER V

THE UNION: ITS FUNCTIONS AND PLACE IN THE STRUCTURE

A labor union is ordinarily thought of as something extraneous, an excrescence upon the structure of industry, rather than as an integral part of it. Actually a union is as much a part of the total structure as an engineering or accounting organization, and the fact that it does not exist in some plants makes it no less a part of the structure when it does exist. Probably the fact that it usually arises out of the desires of the workers rather than as a decision of management leads to the belief that it is something apart and outside. From our point of view, however, whatever organizations or groupings exist within any given plant organization are all equally parts of the structure of that plant. This does not mean that the plant could not function without any one of its parts. The fact is that the one basic relationship in a factory is probably that of workers at work producing goods. All other organizations and relations are built upon this, but they are nonetheless integrated parts of the whole plant structure.

Internal Structure

The internal structure of the large labor organizations, such as the Congress of Industrial Organizations or the American Federation of Labor, is quite complicated, but the structure of the local unit in any one plant is usually fairly simple. In one medium-sized plant, for example, the local union consists of four status levels: the chairman, members of the executive board, stewards, and all other members (Fig. 9). All of the offices are elective and all are held by regular shop employees. Any complaints or grievances may be taken directly to the stewards, members of the executive committee, or the chairman. Since all the officers are working in the shops, they all have direct contact with the other workers. In fact, each one,

regardless of his position in the union hierarchy, functions as the steward for the shop department in which he works.

A complaint from a worker is generally handled first by his steward who takes it up with the foreman. If it cannot be settled at that level, the steward may contact the next level of supervision directly. But if it is necessary to go higher, the complaint is turned over to the executive board, who carry it higher up according to the procedure agreed on in the contract between the company and the union. In some cases, the chairman may delay formal action and may take up the

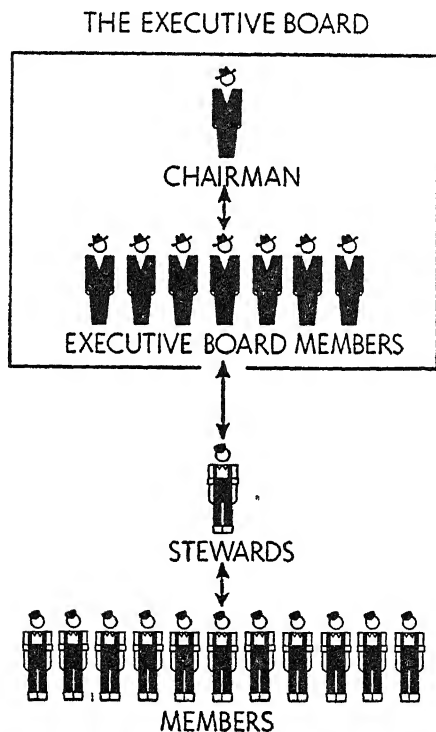


Figure 9. The Structure of a Union Local

complaint unofficially with the higher levels of the company in order to give supervision time to work out some satisfactory settlement.

The Functions of a Union

Union organization often develops as a result of management's limited point of view and of restricted communication within the structure. In the supervisory ranks the whole focus of attention is upon getting the job done and upon conditions affecting the job. This leads to a habit of thinking of the workers as merely tools, merely means to the real goal, production. The attitudes and problems of workers are likely to be treated as unimportant compared to the job, and workers feel that management is indifferent to them. They feel that their future, their rewards and satisfactions, are controlled by a management which is basically indifferent to them and their desires. Furthermore, because of their subordinate position at the bottom of the hierarchy, they feel blocked and helpless to get anyone to listen to them. The line of authority is their one accepted means of communication with management. This means that their immediate supervisor, the foreman, is the one to whom they have to take their grievances. The way in which the complaints are handled and the satisfactions they receive are dependent upon the effectiveness of the immediate supervisor in carrying them up the line. If he is indifferent, they do not feel free to take their problems above him except as a most reckless venture. If he is sympathetic, they know that he may be blocked by the indifference of those above him.

With a union, however, the situation is considerably altered. The union is the workers' own organization; it is concerned with what they think is important; the focus of its attention is on the workers, not on the work. The fact of a union gives the workers a feeling of unity as a group, which makes them feel protected and courageous. As individual workers they hesitate to stand up for their rights against their bosses; and when one does occasionally, the others look upon him as brave but foolhardy. But as union members, with a group behind them to back them up and protect them, they can speak without fear. Furthermore, their immediate supervisors are not then the only ones to whom they can go with their com-

plaints; they can take their grievances to their union representatives and expect to get some action.

Some of the situations and worker feelings which stimulate demands on the union are shown in the following statements by employees:

1. I feel so badly I could scream. With my service and the way I'm pushed around I complained to the union representative and he said he was going to take it up with the big boss. I'm not wasting my time talking to any supervisors any more, because they don't do a thing for you.

2. I didn't get a raise this time. I sure was hurt about it. They never call me up and tell me anything about the job, yet I don't get a raise. I come in every morning, I'm never late, but I never get anything for it. I'm going to talk to the shop steward.

3. I'm back here and it sure gripes me. There are still men over me there with shorter service than I have, but they transfer me. It means a cut of \$5.00 a week for me. I saw my union steward this morning and complained to him.

In all these statements the employees feel that they have been unfairly treated and that they must look to the union to defend their interests. In the first statement the employee feels that his superior cannot or will not correct the situation and that the union will take the complaint to the Big Boss. In the second statement the operator seems to feel completely ignored since he gets neither a raise nor any recognition for his faithful service. As these statements suggest, the attitude of employees toward the union and the extent to which they feel the need of a union is frequently closely related to the effectiveness with which the line handles work dissatisfactions.

Even those who are not especially ardent union members recognize that it is only as a group that they dare to stand up to the boss. As one worker said,

I ain't too sure about the union. I guess it's all right for some, but I can't see it does me much good. Of course, if you've got a complaint it's better to have the union to go to the boss with you. It's hard sometimes to get the boss to listen when you have to go to him all alone and lots of people are afraid to do it. With the union you know he will pay some attention and not push you around.

Union Communication

Besides giving them this feeling of strength as a group, the union has a variety of other functions for the workers. Most important, it has highly formalized procedures by means of which it can bring its demands, the workers' demands, directly to top management if necessary, and thrust its point of view upon them without being delayed and blocked by intermediate supervisory levels. Through its stewards and other officials, it serves as another channel of communication through which information can move up through the structure even as far as top management. Unlike other channels, however, communication through the union is not controlled by management. The union is not trying to satisfy the demands of management for information, it is not trying to give management only the "good news," and it is not trying to protect itself from management's criticism. On the contrary, union communication is seldom simply for the purpose of keeping management informed, but is predominantly concerned with bringing *to* management criticisms of the way line organizations are functioning and demands for changes. In this respect the union is unique in the industrial structure. In all the other organizations in the structure the great bulk of communication takes the form of information moving *up* and criticisms and demands moving *down*. Communication upward through the union, however, serves to put pressure on management and supervision, and sets in motion changes in activities in a way that other forms of communication fail to do. Significantly, however, the union can not make the decisions nor actually take the action necessary to solve the problems about which it complains and makes demands. It acts largely as a mechanism for getting supervision's attention to employees' interests, insisting on decisions, and speeding up action. Decisions and final action must come down the line from above.

Union communication may cover a wide range of subject matter and is, in fact, almost as versatile as the line of authority in this respect; but unlike the line, it is always directed toward

the workers' interests rather than toward the job and the effect of things upon the work. A foreman reporting to his boss on some difficulty in the shop is thinking mostly in terms of what it means to the job; a shop steward reporting on the same incident to the union is thinking of the workers' attitudes and feelings about it. When both of these reports are passed on to management, one through the line and one through the union, then management must examine the situation both from the point of view of the work and from the point of view of the workers.

The union, too, serves to speed up action on worker requests and complaints, either by speeding up communication upward through the structure or by "short-circuiting" the line. In many cases, as we pointed out in an earlier discussion of communication, worker requests move very slowly up the line, and waiting for action may seem interminable. The request or complaint is viewed with less and less interest as it goes up the line and gets farther removed from the work situation; each level of supervisions feels that it is rather unimportant, and each one either neglects to act on it or passes it on to his superior without making a decision. In all such cases the entrance of the union into the situation speeds up the processes of communication and decision. The union does not have to wait for things to move up the line through the normal routes, but can go directly, without waiting, to any level. This fact speeds communication up the line especially at the lower levels of supervision where they do not have the authority to make the decisions. If the union should go to a higher authority with a request which has not already come up the line, then the lower levels are "on the spot" for not having kept their superiors informed. For that reason, the moment a case goes to the union, the news is passed up the line in a hurry. For example, a worker feels that he deserves an up-grading to a higher grade of work, and he requests it of his foremen. The foreman feels that the change is not justified, or at least that it will not benefit the job, so he refuses

or puts it off and forgets about it. The worker, however, is not satisfied and he goes to his shop steward. The steward sees the foreman and says that he thinks the request is justified. The foreman then either grants the request, refuses it, or says that he will have to consult with his boss, depending on his authority in the matter. Unless he has the authority to allow

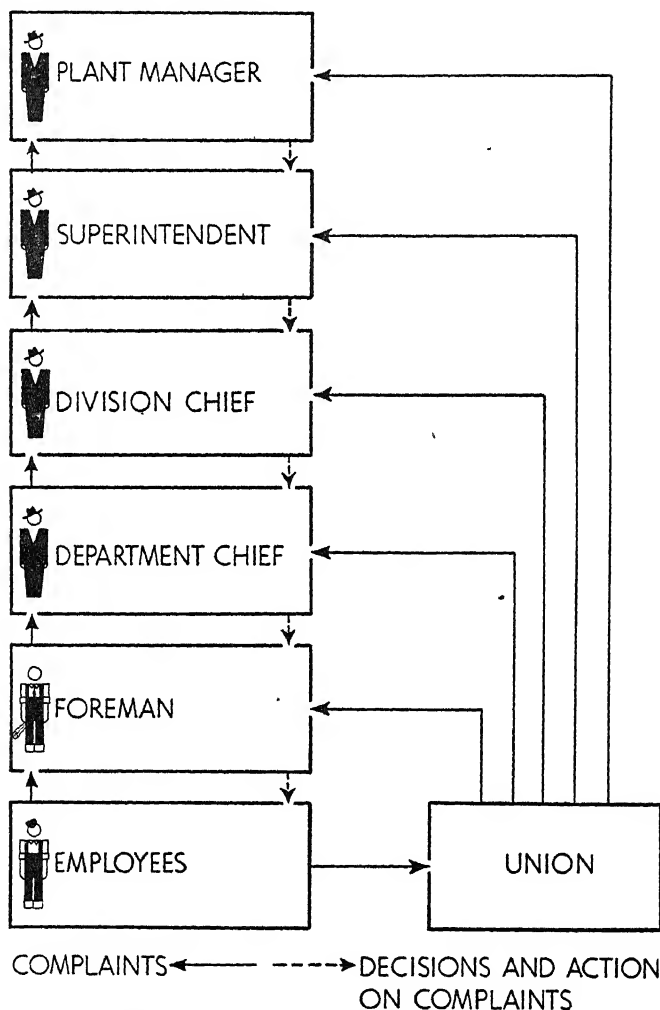


Figure 10. Communication Through the Union

the change and does allow it, he will inform his boss of the incident, presenting his side of the story and his excuses for not acting sooner. This is imperative, because his boss must be informed before the union goes to him with the request. At higher levels, or whenever the supervisor can make the decision and is merely "stalling" because of indifference or lack of attention, the union may serve to hurry his decision, not necessarily by actually going above him, but sometimes merely by the fact of having the ability to go above if he does not act.

The functions of union communication as compared with communication through the line of authority can be diagrammed as in Figure 10. Solid line arrows indicate the channels through which information and complaints may pass up the line; dotted arrows show decisions and action moving down. With a union the employee is not limited to communication up through the line but may go to either his supervisor or his union representative with his problems. The union can go directly to any level and force it to deal with problems which might never get through the line; and when there is delay or blockage at one level, the union can short-circuit the line and take problems to the next level. It will be noted, however, that decisions and action do not come from the union but from management and are passed down through the lines of authority.

Union Organization

The union has internal problems of organization and relationships quite different from the other organizations. In the first place, there is little of the concept of authority in union relationships. The chairman is not the "boss." He does not give orders or make decisions which can be imposed on those below him. He does not directly control the distribution of rewards or recognition for the individuals. In contrast to the line, where supervisors are selected by their superiors, union officials are elected by, and are therefore responsible to,

those below them in the union hierarchy. Besides this, or perhaps because of it, the union also lacks the elaborate system of rewards and punishments which a line organization usually has available. The average union member accepts the union activities as useful but incidental to the work. His daily life, his hopes, and expectations are centered much more around his job than around the union. His eye is on his boss for approval or criticism, not on his steward. He may be critical of his steward, but he does not especially care what the steward thinks of him; recognition from the steward does not give him the same satisfaction as recognition from his boss, and criticism from the steward only makes him mad.

For the most part workers judge the union by results; and the individual worker often thinks in terms of satisfaction for himself more than for workers as a group. In many cases workers complain that the union is incompetent or lacks the power to get effective results for them. In other cases, and this is one of the severest criticisms, they believe that the union is indifferent to them and does not try to get results. These critical attitudes toward the union are illustrated in the following quotations from dissatisfied workers:

1. If anyone such as a union steward comes around, I'm going to mention that I'd like a transfer. A doesn't pay any dues because she doesn't belong, but I pay my \$1.00 a month and don't get a thing out of it, and she gets a good job.

2. I don't even make \$30.00 a week after all my service. That's no salary for a man with a family. We had a union meeting last night about the percentage here. It's no good. All the fellows are kicking. I didn't go myself, didn't feel as though I wanted to. How can a fellow support a family on a salary like that? They ought to do something about me. What good does it do to complain, though? They don't do anything about me.

3. The steward was down to see me and said the superintendent was going to fix me up with something good. I said he doesn't even know me, he walks through here and never recognizes me. As far as I'm concerned X and his union can go to hell! I'm a fool for paying them \$1.00 a month!

4 We're supposed to hear something from the union this week. I suppose we'll get knocked off on it. I don't think they can do us any good. I think we were foolish to make a kick at all. They just sit around and talk about it; it doesn't make any difference to them. They don't seem to care whether they help us or not.

5 That damn union is no good. We took our kick up to them and got nothing. In fact, they made it worse for us.

The union does not, of course, spend all its time on the complaints and grievances of individual workers, but is constantly keeping an eye on company policies and practices and suggesting or demanding changes to benefit workers as a group. Besides this, the union is always pressing management for uniformity in practices. Thus the union seeks uniform wages for comparable work throughout a plant, and it asks for uniform methods in up-grading, transfers, and so on. If one department introduces rest periods, the union may request them for the entire plant; if one group changes its starting time, the union may ask that others do the same. This pressure for uniformity becomes especially noticeable when one union has organized several plants of one company. Then any change in one plant may lead to requests for similar changes in the others. Under such conditions management is very careful about making any changes or improvements in one location which it is not willing to consider for all the others.

Foremen and the Union

The ability of the union to go over his head on any problems or complaints puts the foreman in a difficult position. Since he is the one who has the most direct contact with the workers and who is constantly controlling and directing them, many of their complaints and dissatisfactions arise out of his actions and decisions. Without the union these dissatisfactions usually have no effective outlet and are not an immediate threat to the foreman, since few workers have the temerity either to "tell off" their boss or to go over his head with their complaints. The foreman can, therefore, concentrate on getting the work done and does not have to worry much about how the workers

feel. Once the union comes in, however, he is forced to think in terms of satisfying both his superiors and his subordinates. He has to give attention to the workers as well as the work, and neglect of either may bring criticism from above. Thus he is, in a way, caught in the middle between his superiors and his subordinates. This situation often gives a foreman feelings of great insecurity; he feels that he is losing his authority and control. If many of his decisions are taken up by the union and then over-ridden by his superiors, or if the union gets favorable action on requests which he has turned down, he feels that his superiors are not backing him up and that the union is running his job. He is apt to feel, too, that his superiors will listen to the union while they ignore him, which is certainly true in many cases. Such situations and attitudes make the foreman's position an unhappy one, especially if he is having difficulties with the job or has an aggressive steward.

It should not be assumed, however, that blockages or difficulties with the union always occur at the foreman level or that they occur only at that level. In some cases the foremen, and even higher supervisors, are aware of employees' sentiments and do whatever they can at their level. Sometimes, however, the foreman himself feels frustrated in his attempts to get higher levels to recognize the workers' problems and help to solve them satisfactorily. In such cases he may recognize the fact that the union is more effective than he is in overcoming blockage in the line and getting the attention of higher levels. This is illustrated in the following statements by supervisors:

1. These guys had quite a kick. They took it up to the union and argued about it. They talked to me about it first, but there wasn't anything I could do about it. After all, there's a limit to my authority, so I told them that's the way things are, so they went to the union with it. After all, what've they got a union for?

2. I suppose you've heard about the rumpus we've been having. What the union is asking for is that we increase their rates. That sounds reasonable enough to me, but it's up to the guys upstairs to approve it. I can't get Mr. X to approve it because he's leaving

and says it's Mr. Y's job, but Mr. Y won't do it until he takes over. As a result we are getting pushed around by the union, and, of course, we can't tell the union what's holding it up. They would be shocked to learn that the bigshots are handling it like that.

In some cases, where a department chief is being dilatory or indecisive, the foreman can get action by merely mentioning that the question has been referred to the union. In other cases foremen deliberately let complaints, which might easily be settled by the line, go to the union because they believe that the union can get action more quickly and easily. In extreme cases they may even encourage the union to take up matters which would not ordinarily interest them, or about which workers have not complained much. For example, a foreman may think that his shop needs better lights, but he has been unable to get his superiors to approve the expense of the change. A discussion with the shop steward about the "lousy lights we got" and a little complaining about not being able to get anything done about it, and soon the union may present a complaint about the lights. The idea of foremen using the union in this way will probably be shocking to management, but it does happen sometimes. And when it happens, it can always be traced to some blockage in the line which prevents the foremen from getting things done through the regular channels.

Management and the Union

It will be apparent from this discussion so far that the union differs sharply from other organizations in the industrial structure in several ways, most particularly in its relations with management. To begin with, the union's orientation and point of view is opposed to that of management, of staff and control organizations, and of most supervisory levels in the shop organization. All of the union personnel, its members and its officials, are workers; and all of its attention and activities are directed toward worker interests. Whereas all the other organizations or groups are oriented toward satisfactory pro-

duction of goods or some special phase of it, the union is concerned only with the interests of the workers. In the second place, the union has quite different procedures for communicating its point of view to management. We have seen how each of the other organizations struggles to get the attention of top management, each working through the lines of authority, each striving to force its interests on its superiors, while the executives weigh, select, eliminate, or pass on the demands. The union, on the other hand, working through the formalized contract negotiations and grievance procedures, can bring its demands to bear directly upon top management without censorship or control by the intermediate levels. This is true whether they are dealing with particular cases in grievance procedures or with general principles.

Unlike the other organizations, then, the union is not controlled by management and management cannot protect itself from the union. In the other organizations the hierarchies and lines of authority serve not only as channels of communication but also as layers of insulation by means of which top management protects itself from many problems and demands originating at the bottom of the structure. A request for a new machine in the shop, for example, seldom reaches top management via these channels. The request is either granted or denied at a lower level, and there is usually no recourse, no formal procedure by means of which it can be carried to higher authority. In contrast to this, the union offers a relatively open pathway to the top and management cannot be insulated against it.

The chief function of the union is to force management to consider the effects of company policies and practices upon the workers. It is the function of management, on the other hand, to decide on these policies and practices and give orders about them. In this role top management may be seen as dictator, and it often assumes an attitude of complacent omnipotence, passing down decisions and orders, assured that there can be no repercussions from below, since it is safely

insulated from any backfire up the lines of authority. In view of this, it is not surprising that management is often reluctant to accept either the union's point of view, its ability to short-circuit the line, or its pressures. In many cases top management believes that consideration for the worker, his attitudes and satisfactions, is irrelevant and even detrimental to the main objective of getting the work done cheaply and well. Even when it is recognized that worker satisfaction is essential to maintaining efficient production, management often resents having the fact "rammed down its throat" or decisions forced upon it by the union.

Once top management has accepted the point of view and powers of the union, however, it usually sees the union organization as a useful part of the total structure. If worker attitudes must be considered, management usually finds it simpler to have one organization which can present a composite of these attitudes. And it is easier, too, to deal with a small group of union officials than with a mass of individual workers when discussing complaints, company policies, or changes in practices. In this particular the union can function like the other organizations in the structure, assembling and selecting from a mass of detail the significant matters to be presented to management, and aiding in the interpretation because of its knowledge of these details. Even here, however, there is an important difference between the union and the other organizations. When the others have brought information to top management and helped to interpret it, then management makes the decisions and gives them back down the line as "orders." The union, however, does not take orders from management. When union officials take information to top management, they are "consulted," they may make suggestions and may even be asked for advice. Thus, management can say to the union, "We are planning to make these changes. How will they work from the employees' point of view?" Or the union can say to management, "There are certain practices

which are hurting morale, and something should be done about them."

The union is also expected to help management in carrying their decisions back down to the workers. When management and the union have come to an agreement about a matter, the decision or statement of changes is passed down from management to the work level through the regular channels. But the union is expected to explain and justify the decision to the individual employees and smooth the way for its acceptance. Since the union officials are elected by the workers and are the workers' representatives, management quite naturally expects, too, that the workers will accept the decisions about which the union has been consulted and has agreed. If, for example, through the collective bargaining process, management and the union have reached an agreement as to wages, seniority rights, or shop practices, it is expected that the union will explain the agreement and that the workers will accept it. Unfortunately this does not always happen, and either individual workers or groups sometimes refuse to accept the agreements, especially if they mean a compromise for the workers. (One is reminded of our state and national legislative processes, when we consider how often people refuse to accept and abide by the laws which are passed by their elected representatives.) When workers do refuse to accept these joint decisions, management is usually outraged, not only at the individual offenders but at the whole union set-up. Once a thing has been settled with the union representatives, they feel it should be settled for good and all. For this reason management often prefers to deal with a "strong" union which has the backing of most of the workers, which is in reality representative of the workers and which can actually smooth the way for acceptance of union-management agreements.

Union Officials

Union officials are an interesting factor in the effective functioning of the union, both in its relation to the workers

and in its relations with management. Just as the effectiveness of the line in dealing with problems of the work or workers is in large part dependent upon the receptivity of supervisors at each level and their ability to make decisions or carry the problems on up, so the effectiveness of the union is largely dependent upon the ability of its individual representatives. And just as a worker's attitudes and relations with his foreman often set the tone for his feelings toward the whole company, so his attitudes toward his steward often determine his evaluation of the union as a whole. Thus the steward who is indifferent to the complaints or requests of his people often arouses antagonism not just toward himself but toward the whole union organization. As the irate worker quoted above said, "As far as I'm concerned, X and his union can go to ——!"

Unlike supervisors in the other organizations, the union officials, as we have pointed out, do not have either the authority or the status of the boss. The workers, whether union members or not, do not have to take orders from the officials, and for the most part are quite indifferent to them unless they have some grievance. Furthermore, except for a relatively small group of full-time officials, the union does not offer a way of life, a job with a pay check, to which the individual can devote all his energies, and it does not offer economic rewards or status. The union official is just another employee, with his own job, his own problems and career to think about. His duties to his fellow-workers as their union representative do not make his personal situation as a worker any less pressing, but may in fact add to his difficulties.

All these factors have a significant influence upon the kind of individuals who become active in the union. Generally the ambitious worker who is progressing satisfactorily, and especially the one who expects or hopes to move into supervisory ranks, feels little need of union support or protection and may even sympathize and identify with management instead of the union. Some believe, too, that to be active in the union will antagonize their superiors and lessen their chances of promo-

tion. These ambitious ones make very poor stewards, when they do occasionally accept the office out of a feeling of duty. They are more concerned with their own future than with the interests of other workers, and they are reluctant to criticize their superiors or be too aggressive in contacts up the line. One such steward explained his feelings thus:

I've had a feeling, and I've also heard from a lot of the other stewards, that once you get to be a steward you never get a raise. If I thought there was any truth in that, I would quit this job right away. No sense in me sticking to a steward's job if I can't get a raise out of it. I actually heard a lot of the stewards talk like that. Why is it I can't get something better around here?

. . . I'd like to get something I really like. After all, I've got twenty years' service and I wouldn't want to stop at \$35.00 a week. That's why if I thought being a steward kept me from getting a raise, I'd get out of this as fast as I could.

. . . I don't mind the job at all. I've learned a lot on it. But if it is going to hurt me, I'd get out of the union tomorrow.

In other cases earnest employees, working hard to make a showing on their jobs, feel that they do not have time for union activities. These, too, are ineffectual and promote antagonism to the union if they become stewards. Their preoccupation with their own jobs, their reluctance to discuss union matters on the job, and their concern with proper shop behavior, all tend to keep them away from the people whom they are supposed to represent, and force the other employees to take the initiative in bringing matters to them. One of these stewards explained his position:

When they brought that thing up to me about the low earnings, I intended to take it up. First three guys came over to me, and then five more, then seven more, and finally I said, "Hey, let's not have any more of this up here." I told them we could have a meeting over at headquarters so that's what we decided to do. I figured, let them have their meeting. That way they can raise their opinions and let off steam over there. I haven't got time to listen to that stuff during working hours, especially when they pile over here to see me. That looks very bad on the job.

. I don't spend hardly any time on union activities during working hours. I have a lot of new people in here that I should be contacting to try to get them to join up. I just don't feel as though I ought to spend the time on it.

In other cases there are the older skilled workers who feel that they have made satisfactory progress and who are, in many cases, the spokesmen or leaders of their work groups. They are likely to feel that the union has little to offer them, or sometimes that the union is a fine thing for the others, but that they themselves do not have time to be active. Like the other indifferent ones, they sometimes accept jobs as stewards through feelings of duty or because they think the wrong people are running the union. Usually they soon grow tired of the duties and drop out "to give someone else a chance."

On the other hand, many stewards and other union officials are very active and enthusiastic members who are aggressive in upholding what they consider the rights of the workers, who take seriously their duties as representatives of the workers, and who are very critical of stewards who approach supervisors timidly or not at all. Something of their attitude was expressed by one steward, who said:

It is hard for me to know when they really have something to complain about. After all, I have to go up the line with some of these things, and sometimes I am not so convinced that the employee has a squawk coming. But I carry it along just the same because I feel that I owe it to them because of my job as steward. These guys that are indifferent to their responsibilities give me a pain in the neck.

Often the person who is dissatisfied with his own situation, who is very critical of management and the work generally, who is a "sore-head" or "griper" in the eyes of the foremen and management, is very active in the union and becomes a steward or higher official. The workers often feel that such a person will put up a better fight for their interests than one who is less critical and accepts conditions. Such a steward, however, who is aggressive, antagonistic, and inclined to belligerence, generally rubs foremen and management the wrong way, and they invariably feel that he is prejudiced and unreasonable.

Problems of Stewards

Another problem of union personnel is that the officials change quite frequently, especially the shop stewards. This means that at any given time a great many union stewards are novices who have not established relations with the workers as their representatives, and who have not devised techniques for dealing with supervisors. It means, too, that supervisors and workers are continually having to deal with new stewards who are unfamiliar with procedures, who do not know what has gone on before, and who, therefore, have a lot to learn before they can function efficiently. Very frequently neither the union organization nor management has the benefit of a stable group which, over the years, constantly improves its understanding of the problems and its skill in handling them. Each time there is a change in officials in the union, there is a resulting period of tension and adjustment, with the new officials feeling inept, the workers doubtful and anxious, and management inclined to be irritable, until satisfactory and familiar working relationships are developed again.

Some workers do, of course, remain active in the union over a period of time, and some rise in the union hierarchy. And just as there is a shift in understanding when a shop worker is promoted to foreman, so the union member who becomes an effective and active shop steward changes his point of view. As a mere worker, even though a union member, he generally thinks of problems of the work, or policies, or management's decisions primarily in terms of himself. His attitude toward the whole work situation is personal. If Joe gets a better job on the basis of seniority, Charlie may feel that he is being treated unfairly because he is a better worker than Joe. But as a shop steward Charlie has to think about Joe's promotion not just in terms of himself but in terms of Joe and all the others in the work group. He has to consider not just the promotion of Joe, but the matter of policy and fairness for the whole group. If there are complaints, he has to hear the foreman's side of the problem, too, and try to understand it. To be effec-

tive he has to know the foreman's problems, too, as well as the workers', why the foreman does the things he does and what pressures he is under.

The steward who is conscientious often meets complications in trying to represent a whole work group fairly, and he sometimes gets mixed up in their personal relationships, especially where there is disagreement in the group. As an ordinary worker he can enter into an argument and take sides, but as a steward he is likely to be caught with both factions expecting him to represent them. Frequently a suggested change in practice will benefit part of the group and be to the disadvantage of the rest, and the steward has to decide whether or not to press for such a change. For example, in a department working on shifts, the morning shift started at 6:00 A. M. and the second shift ended at midnight. Some of the people on the first shift complained that they had to get up too early in the morning and wanted to change their starting hour to 7 o'clock. This seemed reasonable until the steward discussed it with workers on the second shift. They were strongly opposed to the change because they would not get through work until 1 o'clock instead of midnight. If the steward then officially requested the change, the second shift would be down on him; but if he did not, the first shift would feel that he was not representing them properly. In another case, one group of workers complained that it was unfair for them to be kept on a type of machine which was harder and more disagreeable than a slightly different type of machine which another group used. They requested that all workers be rotated on the different machines. Here again the steward had to decide whether to request a change which would improve conditions for part of the work group at the expense of the rest.

After experience in trying to work out problems like these, trying to improve conditions and relieve conflicts, and acting as go-between from workers to management, union officers often begin to change their point of view about the problems and what to do about them. Especially when dealing with a

management which is honestly trying to work with the union, the officers sometimes begin to understand management's problems and point of view and are more sympathetic with its difficulties. They begin to see why it is impossible to adjust the system to satisfy each individual demand; they see the limitations of legal restrictions, of wage ceilings; they learn something of the complexities of planning the work so that things go smoothly. And with this broader point of view and understanding, they often find that they have difficulty in explaining their actions to the groups which they represent. They are making decisions based on an understanding which the others lack, and because of this lack the others can not accept their reasoning. As a result, the officials sometimes become annoyed with the people they represent, begin to think critically of them as dumb or hard-headed, and complain that they are unreasonable. As one steward said: "You know, some of these people are funny. No matter what you do for them, they still blame the union and never give us credit. Some of these guys don't appreciate the position the company is in. The company is really nice to us guys; they give us a lot of consideration."

CHAPTER VI

WAGES AND WAGE SYSTEMS

THE CONCEPT OF WAGES

One thing that practically everyone in industry has in common is that they work for pay.¹ In fact the majority feel that pay is the only important reason for working, or at least, for working at their particular job for their particular company. Many are the pleasant day dreams of inheriting a million dollars, telling the boss just what he can do, and disappearing from the job forever. Wages, in fact, play such an important part in the lives of people that it sometimes seems as if the mere fact that people are paid to work is the source of more problems and difficulties than any other one factor.

Management Looks at Wages

To the owner or manager of a business, wages are a necessity; they are the price he must pay to get people to work for him. In a sense labor is to him a commodity which must be purchased just as he purchases coal or copper or other materials. In this sense the payment of wages is a simple economic transaction which may be governed by the same reasoning or logics as any other purchase, in which one endeavors to obtain the greatest quantity and highest quality possible for his money. Out of this comes the idea of a "labor market" in which employer and employee bargain over the services, or in which there are established scales of prices for various grades and types of the commodity. Unfortunately for the potential employee, he is like the farmer with a truckload of ripe tomatoes; if he does not sell today, it will not be worth anything tomorrow.

Actually to the employer the labor he purchases is not a

¹We are using the word "pay" as synonymous with wages or salary, but it should be noted that there is actually a certain amount of prestige or status difference in the terms. Executives usually receive salaries, and wages or pay are usually reserved for those at lower levels

simple commodity such as a sheet of steel, which he can buy according to certain specifications as to size, weight, strength, and chemical composition, all of which can be tested beforehand, and which can be expected to remain stable. Labor as a commodity is even more perishable than the load of tomatoes, since it is the ability of a person to do work, and since this ability may vary from day to day and may be affected by all sorts of things. Management generally recognizes this and thinks of wages not just as a payment for a simple commodity, but as a means of stimulating the individual to be a better and more effective worker. They feel, too, that the wages should promote a feeling of loyalty toward the company and enthusiasm for the work. Labor is not, then, like the load of tomatoes, because the tomatoes do not care whether their price is high or low and cannot be motivated to make more or better soup.

In setting the pay scale for jobs, management generally wants to keep the wages "in line" with what others pay for similar work. If they are paying much above what seems to be the generally accepted rates for a job, they feel that they are being very generous and fear that they may be wasting money. Many companies, however, pride themselves on paying above the average and justify it on the grounds that to pay high wages gives them the pick of the available labor supply and promotes loyalty and efficiency among their employees. Others feel that if they are paying the going rate on the jobs, then their wages are "fair" and the workers should have no complaints. Still other companies make a practice of paying no more than they have to and feel that unless they keep wages down they will have difficulty in meeting price competition on their products.

Determining how much to pay for a job is often a very haphazard procedure, especially in companies which do not have a union contract. You need a drill press operator so you hang out the "Help Wanted" sign; and when a drill press operator comes in, you offer him about what you have

been paying others for similar work. Or else you call a friend in another plant and ask what they are paying drill press operators at present. Or if you want to be really "scientific" about it, you conduct a wage survey and compare your wages for various jobs with the wages paid by other companies. Or perhaps you make use of similar surveys conducted by groups of companies, trade associations, and so on. In any case you come out with some idea of what the market is and what you may expect to pay. (Of course, the recent "wage freeze" and other war-time controls have changed this somewhat.)

A great many wage surveys ignore efficiency and productivity in their determination of the proper wage for any job. They arrive at the supposed market value of a job, expressed solely in cents per hour or dollars per week or month, with no correction for the fast or slow worker. In general the assumption is that their figures are based upon average performance, but they do not specify just how much output should be expected for the wage. It is almost as if they quoted a market value for a commodity without considering quality. You pay a lathe operator so much an hour and it is up to you to determine what is a proper day's work and see that you get it. This is in keeping with the way most people look on jobs and on wages. For example, almost everyone has certain ideas about the value of various jobs. They think of a job as typist, or tool-maker, or office boy, as paying about so much, and the person who is paid more or less than these amounts is considered well paid or underpaid. Very rarely do they think of differences in pay for similar jobs as being a result of differences in individual ability or effort. They do not think that Mary is paid less than the "fair" rate because she is not worth it, but only because her employer is a cheat who is taking advantage of her.

Wage Differentials

For factory jobs or all jobs requiring the use of tools or manual skill, there is a rough relation between the skill and

training required and the wage. Thus the skilled worker is paid more than the semi-skilled worker, the machinist more than his helper, and the machine operator more than the laborer. This relationship is, of course, a rough one and may be affected by other factors, as, for example, in certain jobs which have carried prestige and corresponding high pay over a period of years even though technological changes have reduced the actual skill required by the job.

If we look at the wage structure of any factory, we see that the wages themselves form a hierarchy which conforms roughly to the general status hierarchy, and which usually forms a similar pyramid, with the majority of the people at the lowest wage levels and the head of the concern and top executives in the highest wage levels. Thus the wages of the individual tend to place him in the general status hierarchy in relation to others. There is, in fact, a strong feeling that an individual's wages *should* reflect his status in the structure, and that it is therefore "wrong" for a supervisor to earn less than his subordinates or for a person to be promoted without being given a raise.

In most companies we find that the wage structure divides the people into two major groups usually referred to as the hourly-rated people and the salaried people. This usually conforms to the office and shop division, the factory workers being paid on the basis of the number of hours they work, and the office or white collar workers being paid by the week or month. Thus we see a separation between people who work for "wages" and those who work for a "salary." As a rule foremen and supervisors are placed in the salaried group. In addition to this major division, many large concerns further divide the salaried group, placing the higher levels in a separate group from the ordinary clerks and stenographers. Usually this division is reflected in differences in payroll and accounting procedures, and it may follow along strict lines of amount of salary or upon differences in function. In one company the division is based upon amount of pay; all salaried people who earn above \$300 a

month are paid once a month and are referred to as "monthly-rated people," and all others are "weekly-rated people." The top group are thought of as executives and are not required to punch a timeclock. In another company all executives and foremen are paid on what is called the "main office payroll," and their checks are sent out from the headquarters of the company rather than being made up in the individual plants. Such divisions are themselves status groups, and to move from the hourly to weekly payroll, from weekly to monthly, from plant to main office, is felt to be an increase in status, something which merits congratulations from the group and something to tell the wife with pride.

One interesting aspect of the division between hourly-rated and salaried employees is that the groups generally have sharply different functions in the structure, and within each group there is a wage hierarchy which is quite independent of the others. The hourly-rated people are shop workers who are directly engaged in the manufacturing processes. They are the skilled and unskilled workers who run machines, handle tools, wear overalls, and get their hands dirty. In contrast are the salaried people who work with papers, handle the mechanics of controls, and tell the other workers what to do. They are the typists, secretaries, accountants, supervisors, and executives; they wear the clean clothes and the white collars.

The rate of pay of salaried people is not necessarily higher than the hourly-rated people, however, in spite of their being a higher status group. In fact, in the lower levels the office workers may earn no more or perhaps less than the lowest level of shop work. For example, office boys or file clerks may be paid as low or sometimes lower than the lowest shop wages, and a boy or girl just out of high school can often earn more by starting work in the shop than in the office. There are, then, two separate wage hierarchies and the status of the individual is determined by his position in these hierarchies as well as by the actual level of his wages. Thus the young fellow in an accounting job may feel that he has advanced over his father,

even though his father earns more money as a machine operator in the shop.

Maintaining the proper wage differences between jobs is one of the problems of management. Those jobs whose wages are "out of line" in the status hierarchy, in the thinking of either the operators on those jobs or other workers, will be a source of complaint and trouble. For example, if you pay a helper as much as the machinist he works with, the machinist thinks either that the helper is overpaid or that he himself is underpaid. In fact, examination of any work group shows a fairly definite hierarchy of jobs; and if the wages for different jobs vary greatly from this accepted scale, the workers feel that the wages are "wrong."

In order to maintain a wage structure in which different jobs maintain the proper wage relationship to each other, many companies use a system of "labor grading" or "job evaluation." In these systems jobs are graded on the basis of such factors as skill, education, learning period, and responsibility, so that they can be arranged on a scale ranging from the job having the most requirements to that having the least. At the same time a wage scale is established with the highest rated jobs in the top pay grade and the lowest rated jobs in the lowest pay grade. Then the pay for any job will be determined by its place as established by its evaluation. Such systems provide a systematic means of comparing one job to another or of placing a new job in the established hierarchy.

From the point of view of management such systems are expected to serve two purposes. In the first place, they are expected to prevent complaints from workers or from unions that certain jobs are not paid properly in comparison to others. Undoubtedly the systematic grading of jobs, if used consistently, does prevent serious variations in pay between jobs. If, however, the particular system does not place jobs about where the workers think they belong, the system itself will be the source of friction. In one case, for example, where a job evaluation system was introduced the grading of jobs reversed

the relationship between two jobs, so that the job which had always been thought superior and more desirable was placed below the other job on the wage scale. This gave rise to so much friction and dissatisfaction that management was forced to restore these jobs to their accepted relationships.

Job evaluation serves a second purpose for management as a means of establishing proper control of labor costs. By careful analysis of the jobs and comparison with similar jobs through wage surveys, it is possible to set rates which presumably approximate the "market value" of the work. Thus if other companies are paying eighty cents an hour for jobs with such-and-such requirements, the company is able to show that eighty cents an hour is a fair wage for all their jobs having these requirements. This in effect prevents individual bargaining on jobs, a practice which often tends to push jobs out of line. For example, in large concerns it is customary for the executives to ask for raises for their secretaries; and because some executives are more aggressive or cleverer at justifying such raises, a great discrepancy results in the pay of secretaries on comparable work. Eventually someone investigates the pay of secretaries; some cost-minded top executive is shocked by the high salaries paid to some, and the company puts in a form of job evaluation by means of which secretaries can be graded and their salaries kept within certain limits.

The Worker and His Pay Check

To the wage earner his pay check is something much more complicated than money in his pocket or payment for services; and his attitude toward the fairness and adequacy of his pay is affected by many factors both within the factory and in the larger society. To begin with, as we have pointed out, his wages tend to place him in relation to all others in the factory system and so direct and limit his relations with them to some extent. His place in the wage structure affects his attitudes and relations to Joe and Jim who work beside him, to the new man who has just started on the next bench, and to the women who are learning to run certain machines. At the same time

his ideas of what constitutes a fair or an adequate wage are in part a reflection of both these attitudes and relations and of his place in the wage hierarchy. This is particularly apparent when he or another worker associated with him is given a raise. When a raise is given to one worker in the group, that one usually feels that he has been set apart and is somehow above the rest. The others feel slighted, think they should have raises too, and assure themselves that they are just as good as he is. They all feel vaguely that they have lost status in relation to this one, and the effect is much as if everyone had been given a cut in wages except him. Their idea of a fair wage changes immediately, and all feel that what is fair for him is fair for them all. Very rarely will they admit that the other is a better worker, and they may claim that they have not had an opportunity to show their ability or develop it as he has. In any case, the supervisor has on his hands a very dissatisfied group who are likely to turn against the favored one.

Besides these personal attitudes, there are some general beliefs among workers about the fairness of wages and job differentials. As we have pointed out, it is not considered fair to pay a machinist less than his helper or a foreman less than his workers. Sentiments toward length of service, either on the job, in the department, or in the company also affect attitudes toward pay. A new man, for example, can not be brought into a job at more pay than others already on that job without causing resentment and dissatisfaction. Old-timers and experienced workers believe firmly that they should be paid more than newcomers or beginners. And the man who spent years as an apprentice feels that he is worth more than the man who learned the job through some speeded-up training program.

Another important consideration for the wage-earner is the effect of his pay upon his life outside the factory. The size of his pay check has a very real influence upon his place in the community. It may limit and determine the kind of home he has, the neighborhood he lives in, and the friends he may acquire,

and it is frequently a symbol by which others place him in the status system of the community. For instance, rent is often thought of in terms of a week's pay for a month's rent, so that a man earning \$30 a week is likely to live in a neighborhood where he pays \$30 a month for rent. As he increases his earnings he will probably move to higher rental areas where he can live according to his income. The man who makes \$40 a week and lives in a \$50 neighborhood often feels that he cannot quite keep up with his neighbors and is likely to think that his wages are inadequate.

An individual's ideas of an adequate wage are, then, a reflection of what he expects in the way of living conditions and comforts, association with others, recreation, and social place. His concept of an adequate wage is actually more a part of the way he thinks about himself and his whole way of life than a part of the job he does. From his point of view an adequate wage is one which enables him to live in the kind of neighborhood, among the kind of people, to which he feels that he belongs. He should be able to have a car if the others do, wear the same kind of clothes, eat as they do, entertain in the same way, and generally spend his money as his friends and neighbors do. If his earnings do not permit these things, he worries about his relationships and his place in the neighborhood or community, and he thinks that his wages are inadequate and unfair. For example, a college graduate, son of a professional man, living in an upper-middle class neighborhood, would feel that the \$25 a week earnings of a shipping clerk were completely inadequate, since they would not enable him to maintain his accustomed relationships and activities in his community. On the other hand, a high-school graduate from a tenement neighborhood, whose father is an unskilled worker, might feel that he was doing well to make \$20 a week. (We are not talking about present conditions, of course, when no worker feels that he is doing well on such a wage.)

In evaluating the fairness of his job and his pay, a worker does not usually think of it in terms of what the work is worth

on the labor market, or in terms of what is fair pay for that kind of work, but in terms of what is fair pay for himself. In other words, an individual thinks of himself as having a certain value, quite aside from any particular job. This same attitude is seen when, for example, a highly skilled man is put on a less-skilled and lower-paid job for some reason. He invariably feels that, since he has the ability to do more skilled and more valuable work, he should be paid accordingly. This does not mean that he thinks the job is worth more; in fact, he may quite agree that the job is only worth so much. It does mean that he has certain ideas of his own worth, and of what wage he must have to maintain his established relationships and feelings of status.

Sometimes a wage may be adequate and still not be considered fair. There is, as we have pointed out, a rough correlation between status in the work hierarchy and rate of pay. In the community outside the factory both of these things, the kind of job he does and the size of his pay check as demonstrated by his spending, are indications of the individual's status and importance at work. Each group in our society has certain ideas about what is a fair income for "people like them," and members who earn less than is "proper" for their group generally feel sensitive and insecure, try to conceal the fact from their friends, and think that their rate of pay is unfair. Even an individual who has other income than his pay check, who has no actual financial difficulty in meeting the economic standards of his friends, is usually ashamed and apologetic if his wages are much below theirs. If his rate of pay does not indicate a work status comparable to that of his friends and neighbors, he may feel that it is unfair, even though he does not "really need" the money.

MERIT INCREASE SYSTEMS

Management's Point of View

Management is inclined to believe that money is the principal motivation of people in industry, and that by proper

manipulation wages can be the most effective incentive to better work and greater production. Many top executives even assume that all difficulties between people at work, all problems of co-operation, can be solved by the proper wage formula. They believe that the economic difficulties of paying high wages in the face of stiff price competition is all that stands in the way of their having a loyal, enthusiastic, and efficient force of workers. As a result of such beliefs the matter of proper wage policies and systems is of great concern to management. Probably every factory or business is interested in obtaining maximum results from the money spent, and they are, therefore, always interested in wage systems which will provide effective incentives to their employees. Out of such interest a wide variety of wage systems have arisen, each one usually based on a few simple assumptions concerning the way in which money can serve as a motivating factor. The simplest system is that which may be called the merit increase, or merit raise, system, in which wage increases are granted at the discretion of management or other supervisors on the basis of an individual's performance and his value to the company. In theory management, or its representatives, are watching the performance of every worker; and as one improves and demonstrates his increased value to the company, he is rewarded by an increase in his wages. Also as one back-slides and decreases in efficiency or value, his wages are cut. Such a theory puts management in the role of the all-wise and all-just, weighing every act and meting out rewards and punishments accordingly.

The individual working under such a system, whether a shop worker, supervisor, or executive, is expected to be earnest and enthusiastic because he knows that he will be rewarded by a wage increase if he improves his performance. He should be enthusiastic in co-operating with others for the good of the job and the company because such co-operation will be noted and rewarded. He should be constantly trying to increase his knowledge of his own job and of others; he should be interested

in the success of the company. He should not be critical of the policies or decisions of management but should be a "good soldier" and do his best to carry out the orders. If he does all these things well, his superiors will know it and reward him accordingly.

The Limitations

Unfortunately most such merit increase systems have certain "bugs" in them and do not seem to work quite according to theory. For one thing there are usually limits to the amount management will pay for any one job, so that the job one is on sets the ceiling beyond which he cannot go no matter how much he improves. A janitor, for example, is usually paid less than a machinist, and no matter how hard the janitor works or how he improves his efficiency, he will probably never rise to the wage level of the skilled machinist. This means that to rise beyond the limits set by a given job the individual must move on to a higher-rated job. Since this movement is limited by the openings available, and since the higher-rated jobs are usually fewer than the low-rated jobs, it is obvious that hard work and self-improvement are not an automatic passport to continued wage increases.

Economic conditions further affect the merit raises. When times are good, management may be very generous with raises; but when business is bad, raises may be few and far between, because management believes that raises are an increase in costs which cannot be permitted under such conditions. The result is that when business is bad the wage progress of an individual is usually very slow regardless of how much he improves his efficiency, while in good times he may progress rapidly with comparatively little effort toward improvement. To the worker who progressed very slowly to the top level for his job during bad times, it usually seems very unfair that people coming in during good times rise to his level very quickly.

In companies which have periodic rate revision, the amount

of raises at any one period is continually being adjusted to meet conditions at that time. Top executives look over their budgets, estimate how much increase in payroll can be allowed, and decide that increases can amount to only a certain percentage of the total payroll for this period. The foremen's recommendations, which are usually too high for these estimates, will then be trimmed to fit the required percentage. In this way management maintains the necessary control, and at the same time gives the impression to the lower levels that a raise is not something to which they have a right because they have earned it, but is something which may be given or withheld at the discretion of management.

Evaluating the Workers

The problem of evaluating the individual workers presents one of the most difficult and complicated problems in any such system. In the first place, there is the problem of what management expects from the individual. For what are they paying? Do they judge the individual's value solely on the basis of quantity of work produced, or will they pay for willingness to co-operate, for conscientious endeavor, for loyalty, dependability, and so on? And then how do they measure these things on which they base their increases? If output is the chief criterion, what happens to the fellow who sacrifices output for the sake of good workmanship, or who co-operates with others in the interest of the job as a whole even though it cuts down on his own output? And what happens to the fellow who increases his efficiency very rapidly until he reaches his maximum and then cannot show further improvement, although he works at that same level of efficiency year after year? And what do you do for the conscientious worker who goes along year after year taking whatever job is given him without complaint, doing them well if not brilliantly, accepting the judgment and decisions of his superiors without question or doubt, and generally doing the best he can? Every

worker knows what happens to him: he goes just so far and then stops getting raises.

In theory merit increases are an expression of the increased value of the individual to the company and should, therefore, have little relation to what others do. Actually there is considerable confusion when deciding upon the merits of an individual, and he is not measured against any absolute yardstick of value or by any set standards to show degrees of improvement, probably because such standards of measurement are almost impossible to devise. As a rule an individual is compared not with any scale but with his own past performance or with the performance of others. Thus the individual who has shown pretty clear-cut and obvious improvement in performance may be judged deserving of a raise, or the one who is the most efficient of a group may be thought to deserve a higher wage than the others. There are, then, two different merit-raise policies. In one case, a person is working against his own past record and will be given a raise if he beats his own performance. In the other, members of the work group are competing with each other, and the one who does the best work gets the raise.

To further complicate the evaluation of individual workers, in many or even most jobs there is no simple way in which performance can be measured. This is especially true of office work or jobs that are quite varied in nature, so that the worker does not repeat the same routine operations over and over. Even where output can be measured, such as on routine machine jobs, it is still necessary to set up routine procedures for measuring it before output can be used as an absolute basis for determining increases. As a result decisions as to merit are very often based upon the judgment of the boss. He gives raises—or recommends them—where, in his best judgment, they are deserved, and if a worker does not deserve a raise, he does not get one. In large organizations there is the added difficulty in that the immediate supervisor, especially at the foreman level, cannot make the final decision but must get ap-

proval for raises somewhere up the line. And when, as sometimes happens, some of his recommendations are turned down by those higher up, the foreman is furious but helpless. Probably the only thing which can make him madder is to have his superior give out merit raises to people whom he has not recommended.

Generally merit raises are not based on simple clear-cut criteria but are affected by a number of different considerations. In some cases they seem to be given in response to pressure from the individuals. Joe, for instance, goes to his boss and says that he is dissatisfied and discouraged, that he has been working for two years without a raise, that he feels his work has improved a lot and is sure that he is doing better work than some of the others who are making as much as he is. He adds that the cost of living has gone up, and that he had an offer of a better job elsewhere. The foreman thinks that Joe is a good worker who is conscientious; he has shown improvement and really deserves to be making more than that loud-mouthed "griper" Jim. It is hard to replace men now, anyway, so he gives Joe a raise on the basis of merit. (There is always some doubt that such raises should be called "merit" raises.) The next day Joe tells the group that he got a raise, and Jim and the rest all ask for raises within the next few weeks. The foreman may give out a few more, and then his boss begins to ask questions about the sudden burst of improvement in the work group, since he has noticed little change in the cost reports. At that point the foreman stops giving raises and tells the group that he cannot give any more until they show him that they are really improving, that he only gave raises to those who were the most deserving. After that it is likely that two or three fellows who have not had raises for some time will go out and get other jobs; or they may complain to their union steward who will start working on the foreman.

In other cases, however, the wage policy is much better organized, and definite procedures are set up for the evaluation of the individual and the granting of merit increases. Some

companies have periodic rating periods, at which time each supervisor must consider the work of each of his subordinates and make recommendations for merit raises. In some cases this is done individually according to the time a person started with the company, so that a new employee is rated, for example, at the end of his third, sixth, and twelfth months of service and annually thereafter. In other cases the entire company goes through a rating procedure at fixed dates so that everyone is judged, and all raises given, at the same time.

Merit raises, no matter how they are handled, usually cause disturbances in the status relationships in the work group. By giving one worker a nickel raise for merit, even though deserved, and withholding it from another, the foreman or management is saying, in effect, "Joe, you are a better man than Jim, more valuable to us, and we think more of you." And Jim feels not only that Joe has received recognition but that, in a sense, he himself has been criticized, that his quality and worth have been questioned. When Joe tells his wife that he got a raise because of good work, she tells the neighbors proudly, and repeats what the boss said to Joe about his value to the company. Jim's wife, on the other hand, wonders why he did not get a raise and is ashamed to tell the neighbors. She scolds Jim for telling her that he has been getting along all right, or she takes it out in being mad at the company and at his boss for not giving him proper recognition; and she is sure that that fellow Joe with the "snooty" wife must have a "pull" somewhere.

In theory, if raises are given for improved performance, then pay cuts could be given for poor performance. Actually such pay cuts are very rare unless the individual is so poor that he is demoted to another job. This means that as long as he stays on the same job, a worker will maintain whatever pay level he has reached. While this is not very logical from the point of view of costs, the sentiments are so strong against such penalties that few companies attempt to use them. A practice of giving cuts regularly would probably upset the morale of

the entire group, since a cut in pay is a very serious blow to an individual's feelings of worth and to his status relative to others in the group.

Another basic difficulty in the systems of merit increases is the implicit assumption that supervisors or management can make an accurate evaluation of the performance of an individual relative to either his past performance or the performance of his fellows. Such an evaluation assumes that they have all the facts concerning his actual work and will consider the difficulties he encounters and the many factors which affect his work. It assumes that they can be very wise and just in their evaluation of the total situation and completely fair in their decisions. It assumes that they will not be influenced by prejudice, personal likes or dislikes, or friendships, and that decisions will be based upon what a man does, not on whom he knows. Unfortunately it rarely works that way, because there are always many intangible things which influence judgment and decisions; it is always easier to decide in favor of one person rather than another; and it is always difficult to make decisions which are completely fair to all those involved. And for the person who does not get a merit raise, even a fair decision is painful and difficult to accept.

There is, furthermore, in most work groups a certain measure of distrust of the ability of management to administer a merit-raise system fairly and satisfactorily. In some cases there is a strong distrust of the intentions of management, a feeling that no plan proposed by management would ever work to the benefit of the workers. The common complaint against almost any system of merit raises is that the foremen fail to evaluate people properly, that they play favorites, or overlook the people who do not complain and make demands, that they do not take the proper factors into account, or that their superiors have these failings when they over-rule a foreman who is trying to be fair. In other words, they do not trust their superiors as all-wise judges able to decide fairly for all.

In general merit-increase systems are much more popular with top management than with foremen and other lower supervisors. Frequently the big bosses are people who have come a long way on ability and merit. They believe firmly that an individual should be able to get ahead by hard work and application, and that one who does do better than his fellows should be properly rewarded. Furthermore, since many of them have been motivated by a desire to get ahead, they often think that all others either do or should have the same drive and that they will respond enthusiastically to an opportunity to gain recognition. As a result they believe that a merit system will be welcomed by the majority of workers and that it will offer management a powerful tool by means of which they can motivate their people to build a more effective organization.

Foreman's Point of View

For the foreman, however, it is often a different story, especially when he does not have final authority on raises. He would like to be able to reward his people properly at his own discretion, but he knows that final decision is in the hands of his superiors who are often more concerned with costs than with rewarding the faithful. He realizes that wages play an important part in the status equilibrium of his work group, and that careless adjustment of wages may create serious problems, problems with which he may have to deal for months to come. He knows that no matter how conscientious he may be in granting raises, there will always be some who see only their own side and are critical and dissatisfied. Many foremen, in fact, would rather not have a merit system since it so often engenders complaints and criticisms. One company, for example, had regular rate reviews at six-month intervals when the foremen made their recommendations for raises. If times were bad and only a few raises were given, the workers who did not get them felt that it was unfair; if times were good and raises were generous, there were less complaints, but there

were always some who felt that the foreman had been unfair in the amounts given, even if there was a general uniform increase for the whole group.

The Union Preference

As a result of all the complications and attitudes toward merit raises, it is quite common for unions to oppose such systems. In some cases, as one of its first moves, a newly organized union tries to force management to either do away with the system or set up careful controls over merit raises. Even where merit raises have been in use for years, union officials usually respond to the flood of complaints after every raise period by demanding either drastic modifications in the system or its elimination. In its place they usually prefer a system in which raises are based upon service and are not dependent on a foreman's judgment. In such a system the progress of the individual within the rate range for his job is a matter of "right" and he does not feel that he has to play up to his boss in order to get ahead. Obviously such a plan lacks the incentive features which are supposed to lie in the merit increases, but it is simpler from the point of view of the foremen and generally more satisfactory for the workers.

PIECE-WORK SYSTEMS

Piece-work is another wage system which is often in high favor with management. It is just what the name implies; a worker is paid according to the amount of work turned out, and the more he produces the more he is paid. Such a system should provide the maximum of direct monetary incentive to spur workers on to greater and greater effort. In its simplest form management establishes the amount it will pay for each unit of output, or each piece, and measurement of the output of the individual determines his earnings. It is very simple and direct in its basic principles, but it becomes very complicated in actual application.

This system has considerable appeal to certain of our ideas of what is fair, and especially to the idea that the individual who works hard and produces should be rewarded. As we have seen, to reward these hard workers through merit increases is a very difficult problem, and it is inadvisable to punish those who do not produce. All this is solved theoretically by piece-work; when they work hard they get paid for it, and when they do not work hard they do not get paid. Each member of a work group will work out his position in the wage system without being dependent on the judgment or good will of his boss. Furthermore, the system itself is supposed to supply all the necessary incentive, so that the boss does not have to stand over his people and by weight of authority, threats, or kind words struggle to get them to do a fair day's work.

From the point of view of management this system has the advantage of not only stimulating output, which it actually does, but of being an effective control of labor costs. When a rate is set for a given job, that fixes the amount which will be paid to the workers. Thereby the labor cost can be known before the work is actually done and will not be dependent upon the ability of the foreman to get the work out of his people. In actual practice it is not, of course, quite this simple, but on the whole it provides a much simpler control over labor costs than other methods. With such a system, however, there can be no savings in labor costs by improving the efficiency of the workers without cutting the rates, but that is a problem to be discussed later.

Piece-Work Variations

There are a number of variations of piece-work systems. In the simplest of these there is a price set for each unit of output; the output of each worker is measured, and he is paid accordingly. The rate itself is usually based on a determination of the expected output per hour of an average worker and the hourly rate for jobs of that level of skill. If, for example,

it is estimated that an average operator can turn out ten units per hour, and if it is a semi-skilled job for which you would pay 75 cents an hour, then the rate would be set at 7.5 cents per unit; and if the worker turned out twelve units, he would earn 90 cents. Although all workers have an hourly rate which applies when they are not working on piece-work, it does not affect their earnings on a piece-work job of this kind. The 60-cent man who turned out twelve parts an hour would earn just as much as a 90-cent man who turned out the same amount. Thus the high-rated, experienced machine operator who was placed on a bench assembly job might actually earn less than the low-rated girls with nimble fingers who habitually worked on bench assembly. From the point of view of labor costs, with such a system it does not matter whether the worker is on a job fitted to his particular level of skill; but it does matter to the worker. Therefore, the machine operator usually insists that he be given jobs with rates such that he can earn more than the girls on bench assembly, so that he can maintain his proper place in the status system. In other words, the operators will not allow the piece-work system to function so as to reduce the wage differentials between the top and bottom of the job hierarchy.

In most piece-work systems today the operators are guaranteed their hourly rates. That is, they will be paid their hourly rates no matter how low their output. This protects them in case there are changes in the job, poorly set rates, or in case they are changed to new jobs. It puts a floor under their "take-home" and relieves some of their anxiety over changes which would lower output. It also sets a minimum level of performance as a goal for the foreman to shoot at. Since his labor costs will be high until his workers are earning their hourly rates, he prods the workers whose piece-work earnings are below; and if they do not improve, he will want to get rid of them. In some plants there is a rule that a worker who does not reach this acceptable level of output within a certain period will be discharged.

Another variation of the piece-work system is group piece-work. Here the group rather than the individual is the unit for measurement of output and payment. Although each job may have a rate on it, no record need be kept of the work of each individual but only for the group as a whole. In calculating the earnings, the group is credited with all the work turned out, and this is distributed among the workers in proportion to their hourly rates and time worked. Thus every member of the group shares with the others and is interested in the way the group as a whole works. This is expected to encourage group unity and co-operation and to develop group discipline over slow or lazy workers. In this system the hourly rates become important because they directly affect earnings; the earnings of each individual in the group are determined by this hourly rate relative to the others rather than by his efficiency.

Another variation is the use of "time" rates, in which the rate is set in units of time rather than money. In the preceding illustration, for example, the rate which was set at 7.5 cents per unit under money rates, would be .1 hour per unit under time rates. If the operator turned out twelve units per hour, he would receive credit for 1.2 hours of output and would be paid 1.2 times his hourly rate. In this system the hourly rate again directly affects earnings, since the 90-cent man who turns out twelve units will earn \$1.08, while the 60-cent man turning out the same amount will earn only \$0.72. This protects the high-rated worker who may be placed on low-rated jobs and maintains the differentials in earnings between low- and high-rated people.

Limiting Piece-Work Earnings

It might be supposed that piece-work would provide an opportunity for the worker to increase his earnings far beyond the normal level of pay for his particular job. Actually, however, this is not the case, because on most piece-work jobs there is a clearly defined ceiling beyond which the worker does not

attempt to push his output and earnings. From the point of view of management there are two concepts operating to prevent unlimited increase of piece-work earnings. In the first place, the worker on straight day work is expected to do a fair day's work which is somewhere near the upper limits of his capacity. Piece-work is looked on as a device for stimulating him to give that extra push, to extend himself to the limit; and the limit should be only a moderate increase over what can be expected of him without the extra incentive. In some cases the possible increase is assumed to be only 15 per cent but in others it is supposed to be 25 per cent.

Furthermore, in keeping with the general point of view concerning labor costs, if a worker on a certain job is earning far above the accepted day-work rate for the kind of work, management is apt to feel that they are paying too much for the job. This is especially true when there is no generally recognized standard of output by means of which management can compare its labor costs for the job with the labor costs of other companies. Since this is true of almost all jobs, there is usually a feeling that you are paying too much if your workers earn a great deal more than workers on comparable jobs in other companies. If other companies can get people to do those jobs for so much less money, there is no need for you to pay more.

Setting the Rates

The key problem in any piece-work system is the setting of rates. This may be done in a number of ways, the simplest of which is to have an experienced foreman estimate either what the rate should be or how much hourly or daily output should be expected. If the job is not a new one, the rate can be based on average figures of past performance. Such methods are at best rather inaccurate and are not often used. In order to obtain more accurate rates, methods of time and motion study have been developed by means of which the proper methods of doing a job are determined and the exact time necessary is

measured. In theory proper study will produce an exact rate which is not a product of judgment but is the result of "scientific" measurements. Such rates are supposed to be so exact that all variations in earnings on a job will be the result of differences in skill or effort of the operators. Furthermore, with such accurate rates there should be no cases of excessively high earnings or low earnings, and labor costs can be held firmly in line.

Unfortunately, this ideal of completely accurate and "fair" rates is probably never achieved. There are always what the workers refer to as "fat" or "loose" rates on which it is easy to make high earnings and "lean" or "tight" rates which are hard to make. This is a continual source of dissatisfaction on the part of the workers, since the men fortunate enough to be on jobs with fat rates can earn more with less effort than those on lean rates. This leads to friction and quarreling within the group, and if the foreman controls the distribution of jobs, he is continually being accused of playing favorites in the way he apportions the fat and lean jobs.

This problem of fat and lean rates is a source of concern to management too. As we have seen, if the rates are too fat, management feels that it is paying too much for the work. This combined with the friction which arises in the work group makes foremen and executives all feel that it would be desirable to keep rates "in line," that something should be done about rates which are too fat or too lean. While the workers also feel that something ought to be done about the lean rates, they are bitterly opposed to any change in the fat rates. There is, in fact, a common belief that the principal function of piece-rates is to enable management to get more work out of them for less money. As a result management is always welcome to increase any lean rates, but cutting fat rates is considered a very despicable act. Indeed rate-cutting often leads to strikes and labor troubles and is outlawed in many union contracts. As a result many piece-work systems guarantee no reduction in rates without a change in methods, that is, a change

in the way the work is done. This does not prevent management from increasing rates whenever they feel it is necessary, nor does it prevent the workers from asking for increases when they think a rate is too low.

Individual piece-rates are apt to require elaborate systems of records and controls. If the work is broken down into simple units each performed by separate workers, then a rate must be established for each unit. If, for example, the processing of a particular part requires grinding of a rough casting, drilling two holes, and tapping the holes, then the work may be broken down into three operations, each handled by a different operator, and there may be three separate piece-rates. Furthermore, it is necessary that the parts each operator processes be inspected to see that the work is done properly and counted in order to determine his earnings. Under some conditions piece-rates may be impractical because of the difficulty and expense of either setting the rates or of maintaining the system.

In group piece-work the problems are somewhat different. In some cases all the group may be on the same type of operation, such as drill presses, but in others the group may perform a sequence of operations on the same objects. In the first case the rates are set as in individual piece-work, but in the second the rates may be set on the entire sequence rather than on each separate operation. Then the work can be measured and inspected after the final operation rather than at each stage, since the group performs all operations within the sequence. This reduces inspection and counting costs, and the larger the group the cheaper and easier it is to administer.

With group piece-work the earnings of the individual and his status in the group are directly affected by his hourly rate. When they are paid on a money rate, however, the distribution of hourly rates within the group does not affect labor costs but affects only the distribution of piece-work earnings within the group. Changes in hourly rates can, therefore, be made without affecting costs, and there is a tendency for manage-

ment to be fairly lenient in giving increases in hourly rates. Any such change does affect relations within the group, however; and when one gets an increase in rate, he increases his earnings at the expense of those who are not increased. With time rates, on the other hand, the labor cost under group piece-rates is directly affected by the hourly rates of the members of the group. As a result management is much more careful in the way it gives out raises, since every raise increases not only the earnings of the individual but also the labor costs of the job. This is considered more fair to the workers, however, since a rate increase for one worker does not penalize the others.

RATE-SETTERS

Activities and Functions

In a shop that uses piece-work, rate-setters have a very important role; and because of their activities and functions, they may be seen as a control group. Rate-setting determines labor costs of the products; it has direct effect upon the earnings of the workers; and their piece-rate earnings reports are in many plants an important source of information for management. The man who sets the rates is the one who can keep costs down or let them go up; he makes the rate fat or lean for the workers; and he gets the blame from either side or from both when the system does not work. In large plants there is usually a piece-rate organization which is set apart and functions somewhat like a staff organization. When a new job is brought into the shop, members of this organization are called in to set the rate; and once the rate is set, the accounting routines do the rest without further aid from the piece-rate organization. Thus the rate-setter seldom goes into a department where everything is running smoothly and where there are no changes, but spends most of his time where there are new jobs or where rates are in dispute. In effect, his presence is a sign of difficulties or change in the shop.

Relations with Shop

One of the outstanding features of the relations between the piece-rate organization and the shop is the constant suspicion and antagonism between the two. Interviews with workers show a consistent suspicion of piece-rates and rate-setters. This is so widespread that it seems almost to be one of the attitudes which is transmitted from parent to child among workers and is not necessarily learned from experience in the work situation. For example, it has been observed that young people on their first factory jobs show concern and slow down their work when a rate-setter comes into the department. As a result of this distrust workers carefully regulate their work pace and work behavior whenever a rate-setter is present.

The foreman usually shares the suspicions of his people and sides with them against the rate-setters. From his point of view it is important that the rates be fair or even fat, since then his people can make satisfactory wages without difficulty or complaints. He must see that there is slack in the job to take care of delays, breakdowns, or other emergencies without affecting either output or earnings, so that he can make the proper showing on the earnings reports. He is constantly in the position of defending his group against the piece-rate organization. He often feels that he should study every rate before it goes into effect; that he must look for errors in it especially of operations overlooked or difficulties underestimated; and that if there is too much trouble in making the rate, he must demand a review and insist that it was set too tight. And if the earnings drop on new jobs, he usually excuses himself on this ground, complains that the rates are too tight, and wants his boss to do something about them. As a result the foreman and often his superiors frequently find themselves in conflict with the piece-rate organization.

For his part the rate-setter is prone to be critical and suspicious of the shop. He often suspects that the workers are trying to put something over on him; he feels that he is really

looking out for the interests of the company while the foreman is more concerned with keeping his people satisfied than with keeping costs down. This becomes especially apparent when there is a large piece-rate organization. Then the rate-setters can associate with their own kind and sometimes tend to draw away from other organizations, to eat and play in isolation together, and to put up a very defensive front toward the whole shop organization.

Rate-Setters' Logics

Every piece-rate organization has a very definite set of beliefs regarding the function of piece-rates in general and its own organization in particular. They have firm convictions about economic motivations and the way wage incentives should operate. Usually they accept as self-evident the theory that the desire for more money is the strongest motivating factor for all people, including shop workers. Furthermore, they usually believe that the proper wage incentive should overcome problems of lack of co-operation, restriction of output, poor morale, and so on. They feel that, since the opportunity to earn more money is such a boon to the workers, piece-rates and their services in setting rates should be welcomed by workers and shop supervisors. Therefore, when they meet with antagonism and suspicion, they are apt to think that the shop people are ignorant and unco-operative, and "don't know what is good for them." When a rate does not work, that is, when the shop claims that it is too tight and that they cannot make any bonus on it, rate-setters are inclined to believe that the failure is due either to the shop supervision, which does not organize the work or keep the job going smoothly, or to the attitude of the workers who will not co-operate. The fault must be in the shop, never in the rate. Probably most rate-setters or wage incentive men will feel that this is an unfair accusation or even a misrepresentation of their attitudes. They are convinced that they reach their conclusions through sheer logical examination of facts and that the attitude of the worker

represents a lack of understanding of piece-work and a "pig-headed" refusal to accept the good intentions of the piece-work organization. Among themselves they may admit the existence of tight and loose rates, but according to the logics of rate-setting such rates are mistakes and should not exist. However, in the face of the general suspicion and antagonism and the widespread restriction of output under piece-rates, and the frequency with which wage-incentive systems fail to work satisfactorily, it might be well to re-examine some of the logics of human motivation and try to see a more complete pattern of why people act the way they do.

Large piece-rate organizations sometimes develop both a high degree of interaction as a group and a uniformly defensive front toward outsiders. Under such conditions they tend to be suspicious of members who become friendly with outsiders, especially with shop people. A rate-setter, for example, who develops very friendly relations with a certain shop department may be suspected of buying this friendship by setting fat rates on the jobs in that department. His superiors may feel that such friendships will prevent him from being objective in his rate-setting and will make him prone to accept shop complaints about the rates without examining the merits of the cases critically. In other words it is often felt that a rate-setter cannot be both friendly to the shop and loyal to his own organization. It is probably true in actual fact that the rate-setter who is friendly with the shop is more sympathetic with the shop's complaints about rates and with their ideas of fair rates than the rate-setter who does not like the shop and is suspicious of their ideas.

Such attitudes are, however, contradictory to some of the basic assumptions of piece-rates. Piece-rate organizations, as mentioned earlier, usually take the position that rates can be set so accurately that, for a given expenditure of energy, an experienced worker will earn exactly the same amount on different jobs, in other words, that earnings on different jobs will vary directly with the ability and effort of the workers

and that there need be no fat or lean rates. This belief is often expressed in the statements that rate-setting is a "scientific measurement" of the elements that go into the job, and that it is completely "objective." It is thought to be in a class with other forms of measurement which can be reduced to simple operations in which the judgment of the operator plays little part. Unfortunately, and inevitably, with any except the simplest sorts of operations under most uniform conditions, the rate-setter introduces into the rate many of his personal judgments regarding such matters as what constitutes an average worker operating at normal speed, what variables to take into account, or what unusual conditions must be allowed for. If rate-setting were the completely objective procedure which many claim it should be, furthermore, then there would be no need for concern over friendships between rate-setters and the shop, since the work could always be checked by examination of the objective evidence, or another rate-setter working independently would always get the same answer.

One effect of the assumption that rates can be set which will be exact and scientifically accurate is to stimulate the search for better methods and for more accurate work. As a result modern rate-setting has moved far from its earlier methods. There have been elaborate studies of the motions required to do certain jobs; there have been detailed measurements of various motions; there have been careful techniques of measurement devised. This has led to more uniformity in rates and reduced the possibility of excessively fat or lean rates. At the same time this produces a tendency for the rate-setting organization to increase in size. In their attempts to do a better job they tend to increase the intensiveness of their work and expand their force, adding more specialists along with more elaborate techniques. Thus, as with other staff and control organizations, their preoccupation with their own special field acts as a pressure toward both refinement of techniques and expansion of force. And over a period of time we see that this pressure is blocked by management. At some

point the big boss has to say no, and the organization is filled with feelings of frustration and anxiety.

An Illustration

The following excerpt from a study of one factory shows how one wage-incentive organization operates and illustrates some points of this discussion:

The organization has certain beliefs which it uses to explain its activities; and these have become identified with the organization itself, so that any admission that the concepts are inadequate would be an admission that the organization itself is inadequate. One of these is the belief that piece-rates are wage incentives, that they are a means of getting the employee to produce more because he will be paid more. While they recognize that piece-rates may be thought of as a cost control, they feel that such functions are incidental to their primary function as wage incentive. Furthermore, the piece-rate is regarded as a product of scientific measurement which is something final and absolute; and if the rate-setter applies proper techniques, he will arrive at the correct rate for the job.

While they admit within the organization that a rate is "out of line," they always look on such as a failure of techniques rather than as any failure in their basic assumptions. These admissions of failure are found only when rates are "fat." Apparently no rate considered "tight" by the shop will be admitted to be other than the exact rate for the job. Thus "fat" rates are mistakes and 'tight' rates do not exist as far as the organization is concerned.

The rates in this plant are supposed to be set with a 15 per cent incentive. That is, a group working at maximum efficiency should earn 15 per cent above the base rates. Since there are admitted to be individual differences in skill, there is expected to be a possible variation from this of 10 per cent so that the groups should earn between 5 per cent and 25 per cent. Actually there is a great variation from this ideal with some groups going "in the hole," that is, earning less than their base rates, and others earning 70 per cent or 80 per cent.

Since these extreme variations are considered to be "wrong," the organization must find acceptable explanations for them. And to be acceptable the explanations must fit the concepts of the organization. For example, a department which was on a fairly new job was

running far "in the hole" This was at first explained on the grounds that the group was inexperienced in the work and that the job was poorly organized. As earnings rose gradually over a period of time, this was pointed out to prove that the rates were correct. When improvement stopped with the earnings still below the base rates, the piece-rate organization claimed that the workers and foremen were unco-operative and were not trying to increase earnings

In another case there was a group with extremely high earnings on a job which had been running without change for a number of years. Since this suggested that the rates were wrong, the piece-rate organization made a careful study of the job with the idea of finding changes in methods which would justify changes in rates or else finding an acceptable excuse for the high earnings. The job was such that no changes in method seemed possible, so under company policy the rates could not be changed. The organization prepared an explanation which was announced to all rate-setters. They explained that the workers were all men with long experience on that job and were unusually efficient. Furthermore, they took special pains to learn all the instructions on the job, would even take the blueprints and instructions home and memorize them in their spare time. Thus they could work steadily without stopping to read the instructions or check the prints.

For smaller deviations from what were considered the proper earnings, there were a few stock explanations. When only a little above 20 per cent or 25 per cent, the groups were spoken of as efficient; and if earnings were low, the group was called inefficient in terms of poor organization or supervision or inexperienced workers. When earnings went much above 25 per cent, they explained that there must have been changes in methods of which they had not been notified.

The higher levels in the piece-rate organization kept a close watch over the piece-work earnings of every shop department as one of their controls over the functioning of their own organization. If there was any sharp change in earnings for any department, someone from the organization would go to the shop foreman to investigate the cause. Regardless of the explanation given by the shop, it was restated in keeping with the concepts of the piece-work organization. For example, in one case there was a sharp drop in earnings in a department having a combination of machine work and assembly work.

The foreman explained that the machine rates were tight and the assembly rates loose, so that any change in proportions of work affected the earnings of the department as a whole; and for that month most of the work had been in the machine section. In reporting back to his superior, the investigator said that the drop in earnings was due to the relative inefficiency of the group on machine work. Nothing was said about fat or lean rates.

Rate-setters are aware of the antagonism of the shop and sometimes remark, "Those guys are lazy and don't like us because we make 'em work." In one case where a group was having trouble in making the rates on a conveyor assembly job, the rate-setter pointed out to the foreman that the workers would slow down the conveyor when they could not keep up. He suggested what he called a "slacker-proof" conveyor which could not be controlled by the workers. The foreman replied that the idea might work but that he could get the same results with a horsewhip. The rate-setter said he was wasting time trying to help out the shop foreman and might as well give his idea to his superiors and get credit for it.

Another type of defensive behavior was shown when the company decided that the foremen should be given a better understanding of the piece-work system. A series of meetings were arranged at which supervisors from the piece-rate organization would explain the system and answer the questions of the shop foremen. In preparation for this the piece-rate organization prepared a series of questions which might be raised, and the higher levels worked out the acceptable answers to these questions. Copies of the questions and answers, which were called "The Bible," were given to the supervisors who were to attend the foremen's conferences so that they might all give the proper answers to any questions.

CHAPTER VII

WAGE INCENTIVES AND RESTRICTION OF OUTPUT

To those who hold to the theory that economic motivations are the principal motivations of all workers, wage incentives and especially piece-work appear to be the perfect solution to many of the problems which plague management. If one accepts the idea that to each worker nothing is so important as the opportunity to make more money, then any system which would enable him to earn more should be received with enthusiasm. Some theorists have even felt that workers were so "money-hungry" that they were apt to overwork themselves on piece-work. Actually such simple faith in the incentive value of piece-work has rarely been justified in actual practice, and we are forced to conclude that individual motivation is a much more complex matter than the theories imply.

RESTRICTION OF OUTPUT

Careful observation of many work situations makes it quite clear that restriction of output in some form exists in practically every plant, on all sorts of jobs, and under all kinds of payment systems. It is so common as to be taken for granted by most experienced workers, and one of the first things the man on a new job wants to know is, "How much is a day's work?" The newcomer who does not abide by the accepted standards of the group usually has it called forcibly to his attention. In fact it often happens that such limitations are much more strictly adhered to on piece-work than on day work.

Concepts and Beliefs

On nearly every job there is some concept of a day's work which serves as a standard of performance for the group. It is rare to find a job on which the only measure is "as much as you can do;" almost always there is some definite amount against which an individual can measure himself. To understand re-

striction of output it is necessary to understand how these standards become established and what ends they serve for the group.

One of the most important factors in limiting output is the general suspicion which workers have of the motives of management. Especially when it comes to output, the workers feel that management is primarily interested in getting more for its money. Almost invariably they look on piece-work not as a means for them to earn more money, but rather as a method by which management can get more work out of them. Such attitudes are usually justified, too, since management does quite consistently look on piece-work, or any wage-incentive plan, as a system for increasing the efficiency of the workers. The important thing about these attitudes of workers is that they so often feel that they cannot win in the long run, but that they will end up by doing more work without significant gain in wages. Workers believe, too, that if their earnings are too high, their rates will eventually be cut. This is quite consistently believed even when management has assured them that no rate will be cut without definite change in method. Even where there are union contracts protecting them against rate-cutting, workers still cling to this belief. And almost every experienced worker can tell of cases from his own experience when rates have been cut.

In the case of straight day wages or day work, the fear is that any increase in output over what is customary will make the boss expect them to do more work all the time. If one worker exceeds the others, they all feel that his record will become a goal which they will all be expected to reach. Thus the more one does the more is expected of him and he just cannot win.

Establishing Ceilings

Out of all these expectations pretty clear ideas inevitably develop as to how much output is proper or "safe" for any job. On day work jobs it is expressed in units of output—so much is a day's work. One executive told how he learned this

fundamental truth when he took his first job on the line gang of a telephone company. He said:

The first day I was on the job they put me to digging post holes. I was a young punk just out of college, ambitious and eager to win approval. So I was really getting those holes dug when an old-timer came over and said, "Hey, Bub, three holes is a day's work." So I saw the light and dug three holes, no more

* With piece-work, especially where the individual handles a variety of work with different rates, the day's work is usually expressed in terms of earnings rather than units of output. If \$1.50 an hour is considered the proper earnings, each worker will watch to see that his output does not exceed that amount. If he is working an eight-hour shift, then when his earnings amount to \$12 he will stop work and kill time, or help someone else, or hold over any additional output for the next day.

The way in which these ceilings are established is often not very clear and may involve a number of factors. On any new job one of the first questions the workers ask of the foreman is how much output is expected. Then after they have worked on it for a time, there gradually develops some idea of what can be thought of as a fair day's work, and usually this is kind of a balance between what the foreman would like to have and what the group finds it possible to do. If they find that they can come up to the foreman's expectations without too much effort, they may soon level off at that point. If his sights are pretty high, they may level off somewhat below that point and resist any further efforts on his part to increase output. He may then gradually modify his demands until they reach an agreement on what he will accept and what they will do. All this goes on rather under cover, with the foreman prodding them to do more and the group finding all kinds of reasons for not being able to do it, until finally an agreement, often unstated, is reached.

In many cases the ceiling on piece-work earnings grows out of the general idea of a fair wage for the type of work. When earnings rise much above what is generally accepted as a fair

wage, the workers begin to wonder what management will think about it; they wonder if they have not gone far enough and soon begin to restrict. A few comments about the possibility of management cutting the rates, and the ceiling is soon fixed.

In some cases the accounting routines have been observed to set a very definite ceiling on piece-work. In one piece-work system, which was mentioned earlier, it was believed that 25 per cent was good earnings and anything above that must be due to exceptional circumstances. While a few jobs showed earnings over 50 per cent, they were viewed with considerable concern by the rate-setters who felt that the rates were out of line. They further assumed that any earnings above 100 per cent were impossible; and when the records showed such high earnings, it was assumed that there was either an accounting error or else the worker was putting something over. For that reason no payment of over 100 per cent could be made without the specific approval of the superintendent, which meant that all such cases would be investigated. As a result the foremen let the workers know that it was best not to earn as much as 100 per cent; 95 per cent was all right since it would be paid automatically without discussion; but 100 per cent meant that the superintendent would be asking questions and looking on the department with a critical eye, the rate-setters would be looking the job over, and the accounting organization would be checking over all records, all looking for something wrong. Inevitably no worker earned 100 per cent; that was the absolute ceiling and nobody would think of violating it.

Controlling Output

Usually a work group likes to keep the output level at a point where the individual can maintain acceptable production without too much effort. This does not mean that they prefer to just loaf on the job. Actually most workers prefer not to out-and-out kill time; but they do not want to be under too much pressure. They also like to feel that, if they have trouble

with the job or are not feeling well part of the day, they can speed up and make up losses later. In other words, they like to have something in reserve for emergencies and this reserve means a work pace and level of output well below what is easily possible for the fastest workers in the group.

The control of output usually lies in the hands of the work group. They come to an informal agreement as to how much is a day's work and then exert pressure on the individuals to see that they all abide by the limits. As we have seen, a new worker is informed of these limits and they usually police him to see that he accepts them. If he does not, he will likely become an outcast, will be the butt of jokes and "kidding," may have difficulties with his tools or his work, and generally have his life made unpleasant. Most workers soon succumb to such pressures and accept the dictates of the group, or become so unhappy that they quit the job. The "rate-buster" is, in fact, almost always a source of friction and a center of disturbance, so much so that he is often not even liked by the foreman in spite of his high performance.

In many instances the foreman knows that there is restriction of output and accepts it as a matter of course. In fact, as long as his group is performing to the satisfaction of his superiors in terms of output, costs, or however they judge him, he is not apt to be very concerned over a certain amount of restriction. As long as the group works together smoothly, turns out the work expected of them, and responds to any emergency demands, he is perfectly willing for them to go along at whatever pace suits them best. He himself may, in fact, limit their output if he thinks any increase will call undue attention to the group. Just as in the case where earnings should not exceed 100 per cent, the foreman is ever on the alert to prevent anything calling excessive and critical attention to his group; and if high output or earnings may do it, he will act to limit them. He may do this directly by telling the operators what the ceiling is, or he may do so by manipulating the work. If he thinks that the high output of a rate-buster

may call attention to the customary ceiling of the group, for example, he may keep moving the rate-buster around on different jobs to prevent his developing speed on any one, or he may give him the jobs with the lean rates, or put him on day work jobs. Such practices are, of course, viewed with horror by higher executives or by rate-setters, but they are perfectly natural adjustments to the pressures under which the foreman must operate.

Output Records

The concern of either the workers or the foreman over attracting undue attention to the group often results in the control of output. For one thing, high executives in watching the various reports usually question any sharp fluctuation from normal or any changes which run counter to what they expect. Output records based on department or work group are usually watched closely, and in the case of piece-work there may be records of the average earnings of the group. As a result the foreman is apt to be questioned concerning sharp or unexpected fluctuations in these records. In case of a drop in either output or earnings, he may be criticized for failing to keep the job running smoothly; or in case of a sudden jump, executives may wonder why he has not kept output at these levels before and expect him to keep it up in the future. To avoid this he prefers to have the job run pretty evenly with little fluctuation, or with only those fluctuations which are obviously due to changes beyond his immediate control and for which he will have adequate alibis. Thus the "straight-line" output or earnings records are to the foreman and the work group the "safest" and the most desirable.

To maintain such straight-line performance is not so difficult on long-running jobs, that is, jobs in which the same operations on the same products are performed day after day. In such jobs the workers can perform the same operation over and over, and an even work pace can be maintained. On

irregular jobs, where different parts or operations are met with daily, there may be a constant shifting of workers and work pace. In any case the foreman will try to keep some sort of records so that he will know just where he stands with respect to maintaining a straight-line output record. In either case he prefers to have the average work pace at a level where he can, if necessary, call on the group for more output without too much resistance. Under such conditions he can maintain an even record in spite of difficulties or delays by taking up a little slack in the system.

A good example of this was observed in a department working on group piece-work and making electrical switchboards. The orders were usually for relatively small lots so that the workers rarely worked day after day on one routine operation but were constantly being changed from job to job. Two important control reports were the monthly piece-work earnings of the department and the monthly "fall-down" report or record of orders not delivered on the date promised. The manufacturing interval on many of the orders was fairly long and the delivery dates were not very tight, so they did not have to rush each order out as soon as received but could plan the work over several weeks. The foremen in the department always tried to organize their work with these two reports in mind, and during the month would keep informal records to show where they stood on the orders which had to be delivered that month and on their cumulative piece-work earnings for the month. Thus if they were falling behind on an order, they might shift a lot of the workers onto that job and let some other less pressing job wait. In this way they could make deliveries on time and stay off the "fall-down" report. At the same time they would watch piece-work earnings, especially after the middle of the month; and if it looked as if they were falling behind, they would shift their people onto the simple orders which could be rushed through in time to clear inspection and be paid for on that month's piece-work. Or they would put as many as possible to work on the final stages

of work in progress to get it finished that month. If they seemed to be ahead on their piece-work earnings, they would put the group on the difficult jobs which would not be completed that month or take them off the final stages of work and put them on the beginning operations of jobs just starting. This would stop the movement of finished work into inspection and accumulate unpaid-for time in work in progress. By close watch over the details and careful juggling, they were thus able both to make deliveries and to control the piece-work earnings so as to prevent serious fluctuations.

In another department the foreman used individual output records as a method of keeping track of what was going on. He had each operator turn in a daily report of all the work he did. Each operator had to show the job he had worked on, the quantity of parts, and the time spent. This was a sand-blasting job on which each operator might work on one job all day or on eight or ten small jobs each with a different piece-rate. The operators had a definite idea of a fair day's work, and before they turned in their output records they would carefully figure their earnings for the day. If too low, they would claim some lost time; or if several were on the same job, the fast workers would let the others have part of their output. If too high, they would either "give it away" or just not report part of the work actually done. This did not affect their earnings, since it was group piece-work and they were paid on the basis of work actually finished and delivered to inspection rather than on the operators' reports. However, the work shown on the daily reports was never quite what was accounted for by inspection. While they approximated a straight-line output record, they were careful not to show the same earnings day after day. They said that the foreman knew that no one could work at a perfectly even pace on that job, so if they maintained a perfectly even straight-line record, he would know that they were making it "with the pencil" or controlling it in other ways. For that reason they always

saw to it that their reports fluctuated slightly from day to day in order to "give the boss what he wanted."

In this same department it was interesting to see how the concept of the proper learning curve for a worker on a new job operated. One old-timer had been brought in from another totally different job and put on sand-blasting. He had had experience on sand-blasting years before and picked up the work very rapidly. He watched his daily reports very carefully, however, and showed only a moderate increase each day even though he was well below what was considered a fair day's work and was not working very hard. When asked about the work, he said that he could have reached the average output within three days but was careful not to progress too fast. He explained that the proper learning curve for a new man on the job was one which showed fairly rapid improvement for about a week and then a gradual slowing of progress so that it would take several weeks to reach average output. He was making his output conform to this proper pattern, since if he improved too fast, the foreman would know that the group were taking it fairly easy and would try to make them increase their output.

A Study of Restriction

While most of the phenomena which we have been discussing are fairly common knowledge to anyone with much factory experience, there have been few attempts to study them in detail. Probably the most careful study of restriction of output and its related factors is that made at the Hawthorne Works of the Western Electric Company. The following excerpts taken from the detailed report of the Bank Wiring Observation Room, which worked on a group piece-work system, may serve to illustrate this discussion.¹

In interviews with the operators in the department before the study began, the investigators encountered certain beliefs which the employees

¹Roethlisberger and Dickson, *Management and the Worker*, pp. 412, 414, 416-17, 419-20, 421, 422, 423, 428-29.

seemed to hold in common. Chief among these was the concept of a day's work. This idea kept cropping up in interview after interview. Of the thirty-two men interviewed in the department before the study began, a group which included the nine wiremen later selected for the study, twenty-two discussed rates of output. Of these twenty-two, twenty said that the wiring of two equipments constituted a day's work. The other two men said they were supposed to try to make the bogey, which they correctly stated as 914 connections per hour. . .

From comments such as these it was apparent that the operators were accustomed to thinking of two equipments a day as a day's work. This was verified by the observer, who found that the operators frequently stopped wiring when they had finished their quotas even though it was not officially stopping time. This concept of a day's work was of interest for two reasons. In the first place, it did not refer to the bogey or any other standard of performance officially imposed. . . .

In the second place, the idea of a day's work was of interest because it was contrary to one of the basic notions of the incentive plan. Theoretically, the incentive plan was intended to obviate the problems attendant upon the determination of a day's work. . .

As the study progressed, it became more and more apparent that the operator's concept of a day's work had a much wider significance than has thus far been implied. The interviewer, while inquiring further into this belief, found that it was related to other beliefs which the operators held quite generally. These other beliefs, which incidentally are quite common and more or less familiar to everyone, usually took the form: "If we exceed our day's work by any appreciable amount, something will happen. The 'rate' might be cut, the 'rate' might be raised, the 'bogey' might be raised, someone might be laid off, or the supervisor might 'bawl out' the slower men" Any or all of these consequences might follow. . . .

Statements like these indicate that many apprehensions and fears centered around the concept of a day's work. They suggested that the day's work might be something more than an output standard, that it might be a norm of conduct. The data obtained by the observer provided additional evidence in support of this interpretation. He found that men who persisted in exceeding the group standard of a day's work were looked upon with disfavor. This was manifested in subtle forms of sarcasm and ridicule. . . .

W6 and W2 were the first in output and it was toward them that most of the group pressure was directed. W6 was designated by such terms as "Shrimp," "Runt," and "Slave." Sometimes he was called "Speed King," a concession to his wiring ability. W2 was called "Phar Lap," the name of a race horse. W1 was nicknamed "4:15 Special," meaning that he worked until quitting time. W5 was also called "Slave" occasionally.

One of the most interesting devices by which the group attempted to control the behavior of individual members was the practice which they called "binging." This practice was noticed early in the study. The observer described it as follows:

"W7, W8, W9, and S4 were engaged in a game which they called 'binging.' One of them walked up to another man and hit him as hard as he could on the upper arm. The one hit made no protest, and it seems that it was his privilege to 'bing' the one who hit him. He was free to retaliate with one blow. One of the objects of the game is to see who can hit the hardest. But it is also used as a penalty. If one of them says something that another dislikes, the latter may walk up and say, 'I'm going to bing you for that.' The one who is getting binged may complain that he has been hurt and say, 'That one was too hard. I'm going to get you for that one'."

In addition to its use as a penalty and as a means of settling disputes, binging was used to regulate output of some of the faster workers. This was one of its significant applications and is well illustrated in the following entry:

W8 (to W6): "Why don't you quit work? Let's see, this is your thirty-fifth row today. What are you going to do with them all?"

W6: "What do you care? It's to your advantage if I work, isn't it?"

W8: "Yeah, but the way you're working you'll get stuck with them."

W6: "Don't worry about that. I'll take care of it. You're getting paid by the sets I turn out. That's all you should worry about."

W8: "If you don't quit work I'll bing you." W8 struck W6 and finally chased him around the room.

Obs (a few minutes later) "What's the matter, W6, won't he let you work?"

W6 "No. I'm all through though I've got enough done" He then went over and helped another wireman. .

Another idea frequently expressed, directly or indirectly, by the employees in the interviews was that their weekly average hourly output should show little change from week to week. This does not mean that all of them should try to achieve identical average hourly outputs each week. It did mean that each of them should try to be fairly consistent week after week irrespective of differences in the absolute levels of their outputs. Their reasons for this were similar to those they advanced for not exceeding their day's work. They felt that if their output showed much change either from day to day or from week to week "something might happen". An unusually high output might thenceforward become the standard their supervisors would expect them to maintain. The men felt it would be a way of confessing that they were capable of doing better. On the other hand, they felt that a low output would afford their supervisors an opportunity to "bawl them out". If output were kept fairly constant, they thought, neither possibility could happen. .

The department permitted employees to claim daywork for unusual stoppages which were beyond their control. It did not, however, define what an unusual stoppage was or attempt to state which stoppages were and which were not beyond the employees' control. Such a definition would have been difficult to make because practically all delays were in some sense subject to employee control. Moreover, if the wage-incentive plan functioned as it was supposed to, there was no need for such a definition. It was assumed that the employees would resent any stoppage which interfered with their work and, as long as the opportunity to do piecework was present, that they would never either deliberately bring about a situation in which they could get only daywork or claim more daywork than they were entitled to. Yet that is exactly what happened. Some of them claimed more daywork allowances than they were entitled to or contrived to bring about occurrences which would justify their claims. The interesting thing about these claims is that they meant nothing to the operators in terms of payment. The operators were addressing themselves not to financial gains but to the security they felt came from uniform output curves. They said, of course, that the more daywork they

were allowed, the less output they would have to produce in order to maintain a given output rate.

RATE-CUTTING

Rate-cutting is generally considered "unfair" by both management and workers, and it is clearly recognized that attempts to cut rates on high-earning jobs kills any incentive which the worker may have to try to increase his earnings. In order to convince the workers that management is trying to be fair and will give them the benefits of any increase in output and efficiency, it is often necessary to make a formal guaranty of the rates. This may be given merely as a statement of policy or may be incorporated into union contracts. In any event management reserves the right to establish rates on any new job or on an old job in which there is a significant change of method. Thus a change in method of drilling holes in a part, so that, instead of drilling each hole separately on a single spindle drill press, they can all be drilled at one time on a multiple spindle press, would call for a new piece-rate. Thus as a result of rapid technical development in tools and methods and changes in design, piece-rates are apt to be continually changing. Since these technical developments are originated by management, or by its technical experts, the engineers, the shop often interprets the changes as a method by means of which the rates can be cut if earnings prove excessive. In many cases not only workers but foremen and other shop supervisors actually claim that whenever piece-work earnings on a job go too high the engineers will look it over as a good place to show savings by a change in methods. No doubt an engineer who is trying to make a showing by improved job methods will look for the spots where changes are likely to show the most results. And any spot where labor costs appear to be high offers a good chance for savings. This does not mean that engineers devote their attention only to the jobs where piece-rate earnings are high, but in many cases

it is undoubtedly a factor in their decisions as to what to work on.

Furthermore, it is usually true that when a very fat job is re-engineered it comes out much leaner. This all combines to convince the workers that the most they can expect from an incentive system, in the long run, is a moderate increase over what they would earn on straight day work and that they will probably work much harder for it. As a result the assurances of management that they want the workers to work hard and earn as much as possible seldom really convinces them that they gain anything by extending themselves to the utmost. The changing of rates with improvement in methods also tends to discourage the workers from trying openly to make improvements in the job. If they figure out some shortcuts, develop better tools or fixtures, or improvise better ways of doing the job, they must keep the improvements hidden or sooner or later a new rate will be set. As a result they may work out improvements that will help them do the job better but keep them hidden from the eye of the foreman or the engineers.

On jobs which have run steadily over a period of years without change in methods or rates, it is often found that the earnings have increased gradually until they have reached a level very much above what is customarily thought of as high for that particular plant. In these cases the ceilings have apparently been moved upward over a period of years until quite a high level is accepted by management and considered "safe" by the workers. These high earnings on such jobs are often the result of a combination of factors, one of which is the acceptance of the fact that nothing will happen to the job because of the high earnings. Also in many cases there may be gradual improvements in the quality of the parts or materials used, and conditions which formerly slowed down the job may no longer exist. Furthermore, over a period of years, the workers develop a high degree of skill on the one job,

learn all the tricks and short-cuts, memorize the instructions, and generally improve their efficiency

On completely new jobs, especially those which require considerable dexterity, it is often impossible to set rates until the workers have developed the necessary skills. In such cases the rate-setters prefer to wait until the workers have reached what is assumed to be a normal level of output and have stabilized there before timing the job. As a result the workers often restrict their output and slow down the rate of learning the job, since they feel that if they level off at a comfortable working pace the rate will be set on that basis. They hope that this will give them a fat rate on which they can make fair earnings without much effort. This presents a problem to rate-setters, of course, since they do not know whether the workers have actually reached a high degree of skill and are giving a reasonable output for the job or whether they have restricted at a low level in order to get excessively fat rates. At the same time supervisors and workers may be demanding that the rates be set promptly on the new jobs so that they can have the advantage of piece-work earnings as soon as possible.

This feeling that they must protect themselves from the rate-setters is almost universal among workers, as pointed out earlier. If a rate-setter just appears in a shop department, the whole tone of the place is likely to change. When he actually times a job, the worker tries to give the impression that he is working steadily at an even pace so that he cannot be accused of stalling on the job. At the same time he is very careful to follow every detail of job instruction, avoiding all short-cuts, and putting in a few inconspicuous extras, if possible, to slow him down. Experienced rate men, however, are usually familiar with all these devices and are inclined to cut a bit off the actual timing when it comes to setting the rates. In one case a group, who worked together in assembling a complicated and large-sized steel framework, had worked out a system to be used only when the rate-setter was present.

They found that by tightening certain bolts first, the frame would be slightly sprung and all the other bolts would bind and be very difficult to tighten. When the rate-setter was not present they followed a different sequence and the work went much faster. As a result they never had any trouble in making high earnings on that job, but they were always careful not to go too high lest the engineers make a careful study and figure out their trick.

THE MERITS OF PIECE-WORK

In view of this discussion it might seem that piece-work has no virtue whatever as an incentive. In spite of all the difficulties and the consistent restriction of output, however, experience has shown that a sound piece-work system usually does increase efficiency and actually gets more output per man than a straight day-work system. In fact some experts claim that the use of piece-work will increase output as much as 50 per cent over day work. This does not actually mean that the workers work 50 per cent harder, but only that output increases that much as a result of a lot of changes in the total work situation. When properly introduced, a sound piece-work system does serve as some incentive to the workers and they will make added efforts to increase their efficiency even while they are careful to restrict their output and earnings within certain limits.

Another factor in the improvement of output under piece-work is that the work group generally gives more attention to keeping the job running smoothly. On day work, if there is some time lost waiting for materials, or set-up men, or machine breakdowns, the operator may take it as a matter of course. If he is on piece-work and this lost time threatens his earnings, he is more apt to complain to the foreman and put pressure on him to prevent these losses.

Piece-work earnings of groups or departments often serve, too, as one of the important records which top management

uses as an index of shop performance. As one executive explained:

When I look at the records of a department and see that the piece-work earnings are going along at what is felt to be a fair level and without much fluctuation from month to month, I know that they are getting the work out and there will probably be no serious delays in delivery of orders. Also I know that the people will probably be pretty well satisfied; as any serious trouble would affect earnings and any sharp drop in earnings would cause dissatisfaction

If I see a sharp drop in earnings, I know I can expect trouble with employees and probably trouble from other sources where people are affected by the drop in output in that department

When looked at in this way, the piece-work earnings reports are a potential threat to the foreman. He knows that if he allows anything to slow down the job or otherwise cut down the earnings of his group, his superiors will be demanding explanations. This really keeps him on his toes in planning and organizing the work so that there will be few delays. It also stimulates him to put pressure on the employees to maintain their efficiency. On the whole this can prove to be a very powerful pressure upon the foreman, and in some cases it seems to be the real source of improved performance under piece-work. As one foreman put it, "Piece-work isn't so much an incentive for the workers as a whip over the foremen."

This aspect of piece-work was especially apparent in a plant where a number of new jobs were being put on group piece-work. Before the groups, mostly new workers, had really developed their skill on the jobs, the rates were set at the level it was expected they would ultimately attain. In some cases this was far above the present level of output, and as a result the groups showed losses on the piece-work earnings reports, that is, their piece-work earnings did not equal the day-work rates which they were guaranteed. In many cases the difference between what they were actually producing and what they would have to produce to make any piece-work earnings was so great that the workers all felt that they could never hope to make the rates and did not try very hard. The foremen,

however, were under terrific pressure to get the earnings out of the red. In spite of the indifference of the workers, the foremen managed to get improved performance until the groups were just about breaking even. By this time the workers were getting the feel of the jobs and began to see some prospects of piece-work earnings. This served as a stimulus and gradually they came up to where they were earning a few per cent over their day-work rates. This was not enough for higher supervisors, however, who insisted that the job should earn between 15 per cent and 20 per cent, so the pressure was still on the foremen. They in turn kept the pressure on the workers and continued to try to improve the planning of the job and the flow of work so there would be as little waste motion as possible. They gradually pushed the earnings up until they reached the desired 15 per cent. The pressure was then off and the earnings stabilized there. If left to their own devices, the workers would have leveled off their output even below the day-work rates; they were forced to go higher only because of the insistence and assistance of the foremen.

CHAPTER VIII

THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE STRUCTURE

THE INDIVIDUAL'S PLACE AND PATTERN

In order to have an adequate understanding of the problems of industrial organization, some attention must be given to the people who work in factories, to their personal problems, desires and satisfactions as individuals. So far we have been looking at industry as a social structure, a system made up of many interrelated parts which have different positions and functions. At the same time we should not lose sight of the fact that every person working in industry has a place in this structure. In the physical layout of the factory there are machines, benches, tables, and desks, which are work positions; and on the organizational chart of a factory other kinds of positions are marked. Though neither the benches and tables nor the markings on the chart designate actual individuals, they do represent positions which are filled by people. The physical layout or the organization chart of the factory may remain stable in spite of changes in personnel, in spite of movement of the people from one position to another or out of the structure.

At any one time, then, each person has a definite position and role in relation to every other in the factory where he works. At the same time each one has a place in a number of other structures outside the factory. He is part of a family, part of a neighborhood, part of a clique, and he may be part of a lodge, a club, and a church. In each of these, as in the factory, he has a place in relation to others and can be thought of as occupying a position in a structure. In each case his position means that certain things are expected of him, so that it may be said to limit and control his behavior. As a punch press operator, for example, a person must fit into certain routines. He comes to work at certain hours; he stands at

one machine all day going through certain motions; he works beside certain other people; and he takes orders from a certain foreman. At the same time, his job sets many limitations; it determines the things he cannot do; it limits his contacts and interaction in definite ways. If he is an accounting clerk, he goes through other routines; he has different sets of interaction; he has other limitations. In the same way his positions in other structures determine his activities. A boy living at home with his parents has a pattern of behavior different from that of a husband living with his wife and children.

At a glance this seems like such a simple matter that we take it for granted and often miss the significance it has for the individual. In the first place it means that no one is completely a free agent. Each is bound by his place in these structures, and to a surprisingly large extent each must fit the structure; it will not adapt itself to him. This is especially true of the factory structure which is designed, not to suit people, but to produce goods through a complex system of highly co-ordinated activities of both men and machines. If you operate a machine, you must adjust yourself to the needs of the machine; it will not allow of much variation. Besides this, you must adjust yourself to the co-ordinated activities of the work group, which in turn is adjusted to the activities of the department, and through it to the plant as a whole.

PROBLEMS OF ADJUSTMENT

Since each person must adapt himself to his place in the structure, each movement within the structure means a fresh adjustment. Just as we recognize that there is a very extensive adjustment of behavior and attitudes expected of the young man who changes his role through marriage, so every change of place within the factory means readjustment. If an individual is moved from this punch press to that one, he makes only a small adaptation, yet to many workers it is important enough that they prefer to stay on the same machine.

Experience and Expectations

While such movements require only slight changes in behavior or in physical activities, many other moves result in decided changes in ways of thinking and attitudes and even in the whole orientation of the individual. This is especially true of changes from one level to another in the supervisory hierarchy, such as from worker to foreman, or from department chief to division chief. If an individual moves upward in the structure, he must adjust himself to completely new activities, to new relations with others, and to new ways of thinking. A similar shift is found with changes from one type of organization to another, such as from engineering to manufacturing or to personnel administration. The individual who moves within the structure must not only face new work problems but must learn to think properly for his new position; he must learn to think like a foreman, or a division chief, or a personnel man. This on the whole is one of the least understood aspects of the adjustment of individuals to changes in position.

The individual is not an inert plastic being forced into a social mold; he does not automatically change in conformity with each new role. Instead he has been "conditioned" by his experiences in all his different roles in all the different structures, and he brings to his job a complex pattern of behavior, attitudes, and concepts which are a result of his whole life-experience. Out of this background of experience he has developed attitudes and expectations of the job, ideas as to what is expected of him and what he can expect of others. He may have developed habitual ways of acting which are so routine that he is no longer conscious of them; and to change his role and learn new behavior and attitudes may be a slow and painful process.

Furthermore, the individual may be thought of as bringing to his job his own personal set of "demands." He is seeking certain satisfactions; he expects the job to perform certain functions for him; and he judges it constantly in terms of these

demands. These expectations are another product of his conditioning; they grow out of the society itself and out of his place and experience in it. Thus the son of a banker, with a college education, has different expectations and makes different demands of his job than the son of a day laborer with a grammar-school education. These differences in expectations and demands mean a difference in the way they each look at the job, a difference in the way they react, and the meanings they attach to everything that happens in the work situation.

Looking at it this way, we can describe the well-adjusted person as one who finds some balance between the satisfactions he is seeking, between his demands and expectations, and the satisfactions which the job provides. The poorly adjusted individual is the one whose demands are much greater than the satisfactions he receives. The individual who is seeking status and recognition in the community, for example, will be dissatisfied with a low-status job, and the person who is trying to maintain his position in a group of friends with high incomes will be dissatisfied with the pay of a semi-skilled shop job. A single girl living at home, on the other hand, may feel that a friendly work group is more important to her than high pay. Neither high wages nor good environment, however, automatically produce satisfied and well-adjusted workers. The adjustment and satisfaction of the individual on the job is not just a simple matter of wages and physical working conditions, but is an adjustment within a complex pattern.

Because the satisfactions which the individual is seeking are expressions of his past conditioning in the society and his present positions in the social structures, there are certain uniformities in attitudes and expectations among people at work. People with similar position and background or experience are apt to have similar expectations of their jobs. Thus we can make some predictions about the way an individual will react if we know something about his place in various sets of relationships. As pointed out, the son of a well-to-do professional family is not content to remain long on a low-status

shop job; and when we see him in such a situation, we can expect his behavior to reflect his disturbance. This is so well known that most employment men hesitate to put such people on shop jobs except for limited periods, such as vacation employment of college students or as a training period.

The patterns of the society itself, the groupings into which people fall in their relations in the home and community, are the basis of many of their attitudes toward their jobs. Men and women, for example, have different roles in the society, and this is reflected in different attitudes toward their jobs. Patterns of behavior and attitudes vary with age, too, and with one's role in the family group, so that a boy does not have the same activities or expectations as an old man, or a young girl the same as a mother. People also fit into groups in the class system of the society on the basis of their status relationships with others, and the members of one class or status group act and think and hope differently from members of the other groups. His place in each of these groupings, and in others, has a part in determining a person's attitudes toward his job and the satisfactions he looks for in it.

Over a period of years any one individual may be seen to change his attitudes and expectations from time to time. Many of these changes are the result of new experiences; they are expressions of changes in his pattern of relationships, or his role in either the work group or the outside society. Some of the changes are so common to all of us that we can say that there are certain phases through which nearly everyone goes which create problems of adjustment.

Sex Differences

Women generally think about their jobs quite differently from men and expect quite different satisfactions. The normal or expected role of the woman in our society is that of wife and mother, and this is supposed to be her primary center of interest. Men, on the other hand, are expected to be the breadwinners whose lives are centered around their jobs and earning

a living for their families. This difference is clearly reflected in the attitudes of the two groups, in the things they talk about, the decisions they make, and in their evaluation of jobs and of work situations. Among factory workers, for example, men are more concerned about opportunities for advancement than women. Men do not often refuse a transfer to a more important or better paying job, while women frequently refuse such opportunities. This contrast is especially clear between young single girls and young single men who are just starting to work in industry. The girls usually look on their jobs as a temporary filler-in from the time they leave school until they marry. Even among groups who will probably spend most of their lives working, the girls think of marriage as a chance to stop work, keep house, and raise a family. Working after marriage, they think, will be only a temporary expedient to help pay for furniture, accumulate savings to help raise a family, or to help out in emergencies. With those attitudes they judge their jobs in terms of whether they enjoy the work or the group, whether it provides opportunities for meeting potential husbands, whether or not it interferes with their dates and social activities. Their jobs are judged in terms of immediate satisfactions rather than in terms of future possibilities.

With the young men we see something quite different. As soon as they leave school and start to work they begin to think of their roles as adult men. They often become concerned over their rate of advancement in both status and pay. They often wonder how long it will take them to be earning enough to get married and keep a family, and how they can get to be recognized as full-fledged adults. They grow impatient with "boys' " or beginners' jobs and with the processes of advancement, often slow in ordinary times. They show much less concern over whether the work group is friendly and worry less about making friends in a new group. When offered a transfer to another job, they want to know whether

it is a better job, if it means more pay, if it has more opportunity for advancement.

School versus Factory

Both young men and young women who are just out of school and taking their first factory jobs, find a problem in adjusting to the work routines. In school as in the factory they come and go on a fixed schedule, but the school activities during the day are varied. They move from room to room, from subject to subject; they have "gym" and study periods; and there is continual opportunity for contacts with other students. In the factory they are often put on simple repetitious jobs where they stay at one work position all day long doing the same job over and over, often with little contact beyond the people right around them. This may go on day after day, even after they have learned the job thoroughly and developed considerable skill. In school not only were the day's activities varied, but they progressed from day to day. They did not work the same problem day after day, or read the same book; as they learned they advanced to something new and more difficult. In the school, too, the promotions were frequent and the requirements were very clear. At work, however, the situation is quite different. Not only do they go on day after day doing simple routine jobs, but the channels of advancement are not clear, the how and when of getting ahead are not well defined. When they ask their boss how they can get ahead, he can say only that, if they work hard, do a good job, behave themselves, and try to learn about the work, eventually they will be given a chance at better jobs. He cannot say that if they do this and this and this, they will be promoted at the end of so many months as they do in school, because industry does not work that way.

While both boys and girls have been accustomed to the same school system, their adjustment to the job conditions is often quite different and seems to be directly related to the different meaning that work has for them. Most factory girls

adjust quickly to the routines, and if the work group is friendly, they do not mind the simple repetitious jobs. They rarely express anxiety about getting ahead or complain about the monotony of the work. To them it is only a temporary interlude until they "get their man." The boys, as we have seen, react quite differently. They often have a hard time settling down to the work; they like to play around; they soon get tired of doing the same thing all day long and their attention wanders. As soon as they learn one job they become impatient to get on to something else; they begin to complain about monotony and wonder about getting ahead. In many cases they have so much difficulty in making this adjustment that they do poor work and quit, and sometimes they are fired from several jobs before they settle down.

Age Differences

The attitudes and adjustment of both men and women vary with age too. The attitudes and expectations of the older women are much different from those of young girls. Those who have not married finally begin to realize that they may never marry, and they begin to accept the idea that they will work all their lives. This change in attitude usually takes place around the age of thirty, depending on the customary age of marriage for girls from their place in society. In many cases this change involves a period of emotional disturbance and anxiety which disturbs their relationships both at work and outside. Once they have made the change, their expectations of the job become more like the attitudes of men. They become more interested in advancement and more concerned over status and security than the younger women.

Married working women have still a different pattern. Many of them work to help out in the home; they may be widowed or divorced and have children to support, or their husbands may be sick. In such cases the home is still the primary interest and the work is supplemental to it, although working is no longer thought of as a temporary thing. These women, like

older unmarried women, often put considerable emphasis on stability and security, but they are less inclined to be ambitious and are less interested in their futures and their careers as workers. Older men, too, are concerned with stability and security. Most factory workers have reached their ceilings by the time they are forty, and after that they are not apt to advance to higher grades of work or learn new skills. They have usually adjusted to the work they are on and are interested in maintaining their position as it is.

Class Differences

When we examine the adjustment of people from various levels of society, we see that the evaluations of the job vary with social position, too. That is, the way a person thinks of jobs, his feelings that certain jobs are "good" or "bad" depends in part upon his background. The good job to the son of a janitor will seem a poor job to the son of the president. As we have pointed out, the boy from a high-status family usually is dissatisfied with a low-status factory job; the daughter of a prosperous doctor or lawyer cannot bear to work in the shop but must have an office job. Suppose we consider a few such cases and the problems of adjustment involved

The Case of John S.

John S. was raised in an upper-middle class suburban neighborhood composed of the families of successful doctors, lawyers, business men, and top executives. His father was the successful vice-president of a large manufacturing concern and had worked himself up from the ranks. John, along with his clique of friends from the neighborhood, went off to college where he took a liberal arts degree. When he finished college his father urged him to take a factory job and work his way up as he himself had done. Though he was not enthusiastic about factory work, John felt that, with his background, it would be just a temporary thing and that he would soon receive recognition and promotion.

At the same time many of his friends were returning from college and making their choices of occupations. One whose father was a doctor studied medicine, and when he returned his father took him into his practice. Another studied law and was taken into a small law firm where he could gain experience and build up his own clientele. Another entered the family business in a minor executive position. Each of these other boys started in jobs which had status; they were doctors or lawyers or business men, all occupations comparable to the occupations of their fathers. Even though their earnings might be low at the start, they could all expect fairly rapid improvement; and in the meantime they were developing the skills that they would later use as lawyers, doctors, or business men.

In his contacts with his old group John began to feel ill at ease. When they talked about their jobs, they could talk as professionals of the interesting cases, the problems they must deal with, the decisions they must make. But John could talk only about his difficulties in getting enough speed on the assembly job he was working on, or the way his foreman treated people, or the way the other workers acted. At first he could treat all this as a sort of initiation for future executives, something you had to go through to learn what the work was like and how workers feel, to learn the business from the ground up, but not as an opportunity to learn the skills that you would use later. At first he could hold his own with his group on this basis. He would explain that it was important to get this understanding of the work, and that all the big companies preferred to promote people who had actual factory experience.

As months passed, however, he had less and less to talk about, since he was still doing the same job and the newness had worn off. The others were still finding something fresh to talk about, their medical or legal victories, their clever decisions. John began to feel more and more out of it. He often avoided the group or was glum and irritable when with them. His concern over the situation reflected itself in his work. He lost interest and was always willing to stop and talk with anyone

who came along. He was indifferent to the others in the work group and did not get along well. He was apt to complain a good deal and frequently said that he was not given an opportunity to show his ability. The foreman thought that he was capable enough but that his attitude was wrong; and he felt that he could not recommend him for advancement unless he settled down to the work.

This case is typical of the problems of executives' sons when they start out in industry. Unless times are very good or they are very fortunate, they will probably have to start at the bottom and the way up may be very slow. This is especially true of people at the intermediate levels, whose connections are limited to one company or even to one plant, so that they can not give their sons the benefit of wider contacts at top-management levels which would make it easier for them to gain recognition and wider opportunities. Thus these boys cannot inherit their fathers' status, they cannot step into their fathers' shoes, but must start out on their own.

Problems of Mobility

Boys from working class families have different problems. Many of them have only modest expectations in terms of job status and level of earnings, and to them the jobs that John S. would scorn may be very satisfactory. These fellows soon adapt to the routines of shop work when they reach a level which they consider indicates satisfactory progress. Many of them look to such jobs as toolmakers, machinists, automatic screw machine operators, as being the height of their ambitions, and they try to get special training to prepare for such jobs. And when they have reached that level, they are generally considered successful in the eyes of their families and friends. On the other hand, in many other cases boys from the families of workers are not content to remain at that level but are driven by a desire to rise in status. This ambition, this urge to get ahead, is sometimes a very powerful drive forcing them to struggle for more education and training and more recogni-

tion on the job. They often have many of the same symptoms as the higher-status boys, like John S., who are forced into shop jobs; and they are impatient with the slow progress, bored with the monotony of shop work, anxious to know how to get ahead. Thus there are two groups with quite different backgrounds who react to their jobs in a very similar manner, but the meaning of this urge to get ahead is quite different for the two. To the higher-status person, the shop job is a threat to the position he has known all his life; it upsets his relationships at the level where he feels that he belongs; and all his efforts are directed toward returning to a comfortable equilibrium at that level. The ambition of the lower-status boy, however, is to rise above his former position; he must do better than his father and outstrip his boyhood friends. And if he succeeds he must establish an entirely new set of relationships not only at work but outside in the community

When a person with this mobility drive does not receive satisfaction through recognition and advancement on the job, he often tries in a variety of other ways to receive satisfactory recognition. He may turn to hobbies or sports and put a great deal of effort into excelling in them. The story is told of one man, now a top executive in a large concern, who took up one thing after another, when he was just a young fellow in a low-status job, and put all his spare time and effort into each until he could excell in it. His need for success was so obvious that his associates interpreted his efforts to excell in such things as tennis or chess as part of his effort to gain the satisfactory recognition which was lacking on the job. In another concern there was a large engineering staff with many young graduate engineers in the lowest-status engineering jobs. While these were good jobs and fairly well paid as compared to shop jobs, they were, nevertheless, at the bottom of the engineering hierarchy and advancement was often slow. Among the employees of the company a very active camera club was developed in which many of these young engineers participated, and there was a great deal of competition for rec-

ognition in photographic exhibits and for positions as officers of the club. Through this camera club they apparently received the recognition which they felt was lacking in their jobs. As soon as they began to advance in the supervisory hierarchy or otherwise gain status on the job, they began to lose interest in the club, they found they "did not have time" to compete in exhibits, and often would practically give up the hobby.

When a person is not able to gain recognition in these activities, he is apt to lose interest in them; and he may become very critical of the hobby club, its members, and the way it is run. In one instance a man who worked very hard at photography, but who had never received any mention at exhibits or at the camera club to which he belonged, was extremely critical of the judgment of others, claimed that the judges did not know how to judge the work properly, that the other members in the club were prejudiced against him and would not listen to his good advice. In his work he showed a terrific desire to get ahead. He would work very hard at different things in addition to his regular work, thinking that this would show how superior he was to others in his department. He apparently lacked the ability to do an outstanding job, and everything he attempted was coolly received and left him feeling frustrated. Each time he would react with criticism of everyone in the department from his boss on down, and would talk in much the same way as he talked about the members of the camera club.

The mobile group, with their great desire to get ahead, generally have high expectations. They visualize themselves as achieving important positions in the company, as becoming part of management. With these feelings they tend to have a strong identification with management rather than with the workers. This is especially true of the group from the higher-status background, of course, who have been brought up in the attitudes of the business and professional group and expect to return there. As long as these people feel that they are making satisfactory progress toward their goals, these attitudes,

this acceptance of management's point of view, are reinforced. When, however, they feel that their progress is blocked and that they cannot obtain the status they are seeking, they tend to turn against management. In these cases they express great dissatisfaction with the company; they become critical of all its policies and suspicious of all its motives. If they are shop workers, they often turn to the union and become active in it, or perhaps are active in organizing a union. Sometimes through this union activity they find the recognition they have been seeking, just as others find it in other types of organizations. And sometimes the fellows who are effective in union affairs catch the eye of management and receive promotions which would not have come their way if they had remained unnoticed as mere operators doing their jobs.

"Status Anxiety"

"Status anxiety" is a kind of individual disturbance found frequently at all levels in industry. In these cases an individual expresses concern over his position relative to others. He is disturbed if someone else gets more recognition from the boss than he does; he worries over status symbols; he is concerned if others do not recognize his proper status; and he is worried about advancement and especially about his rate of progress relative to others. This is a common development among those mobile people whose progress has been blocked. Their anxieties may become so extreme that they develop into severe neuroses accompanied by feelings of persecution, insomnia, inability to concentrate, and other nervous disorders.

The Case of an Engineer

One striking example of this was the case of an engineer who started in with a large concern soon after he finished college. He was very ambitious, and the first few years he progressed satisfactorily although not spectacularly. Then the depression reduced the force; and although he was kept on, all progress was stopped for several years. He was moved

around to various jobs and was finally put on one which required considerable contact with outside suppliers. He stayed on this for several years with only a little increase in wages or other recognition. He wanted to get onto some other job which would give him more opportunity, but nothing was done about it.

As time went on he became more and more disturbed about his situation. He became active from time to time in outside organizations but never seemed to get satisfaction out of them. Then the people in his department began to notice erratic behavior. He began to try to attract attention to himself in various ways. He went to department parties, and after one or two drinks he would get up on a table and put on acts or make speeches and generally try to dominate the group and hold their attention. Finally outside suppliers began to comment on his erratic behavior which seemed to be his way of getting attention and impressing them with his importance. As a result of this his superiors "bawled him out;" and shortly afterward he had a "nervous breakdown" and spent several weeks in a sanitarium. His peculiar behavior reappeared, however, soon after he returned, and he was moved to another job. Although there was no cut in pay, the job was with a lower-status department and required daily contacts in the shops.

At this point he was extremely disturbed again, could hardly work at all and could sleep only with the use of sedatives. In fact, he took several times a normal dose of phenobarbital, was still not able to sleep except for brief periods, and would be too dull to work the next day. He believed that his boss was persecuting him, had refused to give him opportunity or recognition, and had talked against him to other supervisors. He felt that the boss had his favorites who got all the "breaks" and were getting ahead while he was being held back. Now he felt demoted to a really poor job, and he could see no hope of ever getting ahead. He was extremely excited whenever he talked about the way he felt about this job. He told how he hated to have the people with whom he had formerly worked

see him at his new job down in a shop location. On one occasion he had gone out in the shop to get some parts to be tested, and as he was coming back with a box under his arm he saw an old friend coming. He was so ashamed to be seen carrying a box of parts that he turned and hid until the friend had left. Formerly he had driven home from work with some engineers from the old department, but now he rode the street-car because he couldn't bear to go near them. At the same time, he was embarrassed if anyone whom he knew saw him on the street-car, because he felt it was such a loss of status to be seen with all the shop workers. In fact, every little thing which could be associated with loss of status was magnified in his thinking and he would brood over each one by the hour.

This case also illustrated the adjustment problem of the mobile individual who has reached what, at least for the time being, is his ceiling. In many of these cases, especially if the ceiling is fairly low in terms of ambitions and expectations, the individuals go through a period of intense disturbance and maladjustment, often lasting several years, until they accept the realities of their limitations.

The Case of Albert N.

Another case of this type was that of Albert N., about forty-five, who was a well-paid expert in a special technical field. He worked in a small department consisting of about a dozen experts at his level and a miscellaneous group of technical assistants, secretarial and clerical helpers. He himself had risen from the ranks of the technical assistants with the aid of evening-school study. For a number of years an elderly man approaching retirement age had been the head of the department and he was very friendly to Albert. For the last two years before his retirement this department head had been ill a great deal, and in his absence he had delegated more and more responsibility to Albert and generally made him his right-hand man. In this role Albert was in constant touch with what was going on in the department. He sat in on decisions about the

work; he sometimes had to supervise others; and he handled much of the correspondence. During this period he felt that when the chief retired, he would be made head of the department, and probably his chief thought so too.

When the chief did finally retire, however, his superior officers decided against Albert, and brought in a man who had handled similar work in another organization but who had had a better education and broader experience in other phases of the work. This man had been in the department some years before, and Albert had known him then, but he probably did not understand the distinction Albert had attained more recently as informal assistant to the department chief. At any rate, when he took charge, he treated Albert just as he did all the others at his level. Albert was no longer "in the know" on all problems of the department; he no longer was brought into discussions of policy and practices; he did not handle any correspondence for the chief nor take charge of things when he was away. He began to worry about the situation, about his relations with the new chief and about his own future, and he developed severe anxieties and worried over many little things which he felt indicated loss of status. Whereas formerly he had been the first to see any memos or letters which were circulated to the group, the new chief had a rubber stamp with the names of the men at Albert's level arranged in alphabetical order, and any correspondence was sent around in that order. Albert was at the bottom of the list and was the last to get the material, so that, instead of being the first to know about any new developments, he was often the last unless he was told by others. Also, instead of discussing all the work problems with Albert, the new chief took up only those pertaining to Albert's own work and never discussed the problems of others with him. Where Albert had previously spent more time with the chief than had any of the others, he no longer felt free to drop in to see the chief, and he actually began to avoid him. Thus he had lost his former informal status and all the little symbols which went with it, and he had become just one of the group again.

For a couple of years things went along this way, and although Albert was disturbed by the situation, he was able to handle his work to the satisfaction of his new chief. Gradually, however, he grew more and more discouraged. He complained to his chief about the work, wanted to know what was wrong, and generally showed dissatisfaction. The chief began to feel uncomfortable in his contacts with Albert and began to avoid him. He began to spend more time with the others, drawing them into his confidence and leaving Albert out. Noticing this, Albert began to feel that his superior "had it in for him," and he spent hours worrying over the cause, which he finally attributed to an incident when he had been just a young fellow in the department and the present chief had seemed annoyed at a joking remark he had made. He soon reached a stage when he felt quite persecuted. If his chief failed to talk over his work with him, he felt that he was being ignored deliberately; but if the chief did comment on his work, he thought he was being criticized. If he saw the chief talking or laughing with one of the others, he saw in it fresh evidence that he was not liked or wanted. In fact, practically anything the chief did was interpreted in terms of these feelings of persecution.

Along with this, he began to develop insomnia and stomach trouble and was worried about his health. And when he was not lying awake at night worrying about his status and his relations with his boss, he was lying awake worrying about his health. He felt tired all the time; he would get home at night feeling exhausted; then he would work in the garden so he would be tired enough to sleep; and then he would end up taking a sedative after all. Then he worried about the possible ill effects of taking so much sedative. He withdrew from his former social activities, refused to play bridge or golf, and would sit around the house in the evening not wanting to go anywhere or see anyone.

Finally he reached the point where he could hardly do any work at all. He would sit by the hour gazing out of the window or just staring at papers on his desk without seeing them. The

boss sent him to the doctor who diagnosed his case as "neurasthenia" and recommended a few weeks' rest in a sanitarium. After a few weeks away from the job his condition improved and he returned to work, but soon he was as bad as ever again. This recurred several times; each time he would improve after a period away from the work and then have a relapse within a few weeks of his return. He was finally put under special treatment, but it required about a year before he had made a readjustment, before he could accept his situation and carry on his work and personal life in a normal manner.

This adjustment of the individual to his ceiling of attainment is not usually accompanied by such severe symptoms. In the case of Albert, of course, his reactions were accentuated by the fact that the next step had seemed to be so clearly within his grasp and had then been snatched away by forces beyond his control. In other cases the approach to the ceiling is much more gradual and the individual adjusts his expectations almost without realizing it. Also it is probable that in most cases the individual has reached a level which gives him a satisfactory status, so that, although he might like to rise higher, he feels no great frustration at his actual level of attainment.

Possibilities for Advancement

All these problems of adjustment are related to the whole problem of upward mobility in the industrial structure. In the first place, we have seen that the structure forms a pyramid with fewer and fewer people at each higher level. This means that it is impossible for everyone at one level to rise to the next, and this is especially true for the non-supervisory or worker level, where there are at least ten workers for every foreman or supervisor and there may be fifty or more in some types of work. This means that only a relatively small portion of the lower group can ever rise into the supervisory ranks. And it also means that only a few from the foreman level can ever move up to higher supervision.

This limitation on movement from the ranks to supervision

does not mean, however, that there can be no hope for progress for the mass of the workers. As we have seen, there are highly developed status systems within the work level through which the individual can advance. There are the gradations of jobs into varying degrees of skill and prestige, and the individual may progress from the low-status beginners' jobs to the higher-status and better-paid jobs requiring greater skill and experience. There may also be a wage structure which provides for wage advancement on the basis of merit or service even though the individual remains on the same job. Then there is the possibility of moving from low-status organizations to those of higher status, or from shop work to office work. In fact, whenever there are status differences in jobs, there is a possibility of some degree of status advancement.

Unfortunately there is no clearly marked pathway to advancement in most factories; there is no clear-cut plan of action and no timetable by which the beginner can plan his progress. He cannot say, "I will do this and this and by next year I will have reached that place." While we like to tell the youngster that if he works hard and shows ability he will progress, we must admit that, for the average run of people, chance also plays a major role in their progress. We must not only be ready and able to move on to the next step, but the opportunity must be there.

Within the hierarchy of jobs we do find many cases in which there are certain steps necessary for progress from one level to another. For example, in many of the crafts there is provision for the training of young people through an apprenticeship which they must pass before they can be accepted as a full-fledged mechanic. In such cases there are usually only two or three steps in the system: apprentice and mechanic; or apprentice, class B mechanic, and class A mechanic. When a youngster starts on such a course, he knows pretty clearly what his ceiling will be and about how long it will take him to get there. If he wishes to go farther, he must move out of that particular system entirely. Even in such a system, of course,

there are decided limits, since the group usually limits the number of apprentices to the apparent demand for the mechanics, and often in depression years no one will be admitted to apprenticeship.

With the vast majority of factory jobs there is no similar road to advancement; the beginner just comes in, takes any job he is put on, and then wonders where he goes from there. In many cases the experience and skill he develops on one job may lead pretty directly to a better job of the same type. In such cases the beginner feels that the sooner he learns the job and develops his skill, the sooner he will be able to move to the next level. Unfortunately any such move also depends upon there being need for additional workers at the next level, and until there is an opening, no matter how good the newcomer may be, he will not be able to advance. Here again the needs of the structure must govern rather than the desires of the individuals.

In every large plant there are many blind-alley jobs which have but limited possibilities in themselves and do not lead to anything better. Many of these require the development of special abilities or skills which are of no particular value on other jobs. In fact in many companies there are some jobs which are so specialized that they are unknown outside the one company and thus have no value anywhere else. Sometimes these jobs are fairly well paid, and they may require months or even years to develop a high degree of skill and to rise to the top wage level. An individual on such a job, who is not satisfied to have risen to its top level, often finds himself in a difficult position. In order to advance further he must go to another kind of job where he will have to start all over again at a lower level and learn new skills. Suppose, for example, a man who has risen to the top level of a specialized job at which he earns a dollar an hour, is not satisfied and wants to get into tool making which has much greater possibilities. But to do this he will have to start at the bottom as an apprentice in the tool room at sixty cents an hour. This may seem an unusual case,

but it is surprising how many jobs in modern large plants are so specialized that their skills are not transferrable to other work. As a result many workers find themselves in the position where, no matter how hard they work or how well they learn their jobs, they are not preparing themselves for a step upward.

Problems of Selection

For the ambitious individual it is unfortunate that all transfers, promotions, or upgradings are directed in accordance with the needs of the organization rather than with the desires or needs of the individuals. When a foreman has a job to be filled, he has to think in terms of who can best handle the job rather than who wants it most. In many cases the one who works hardest or is the best at the lower level is not the one who can do best at the next level. This is especially true where there is no particular relation between the skill at one level and the next. A youngster, for example, who did very well on a routine assembly job, but who did not get along well with other workers, might be a very poor choice for a job where he had to keep other workers supplied with parts and materials. Or a file clerk may not make a good secretary. In such cases the boss's selections may seem very unfair to some of the group.

This problem of selection is especially acute in the movements into the supervisory level. The best mechanic or the most efficient operator does not always make the best foreman; the ability to handle a group does not develop naturally out of the ability to handle machines. As a result the expert machinist or the extremely efficient worker may find that he is being passed over in favor of others with much less skill or knowledge of the work. The highly skilled worker finds that he must take orders from someone who, he feels, does not really understand the job. Recently, too, management is putting more stress upon getting a different type of foreman from the old-timer who was selected because of his technical skill.

They now want foremen who have more education, who understand management's logic, and who are skilled in dealing with people rather than machines. All this makes it harder for the ambitious man to rise by virtue of hard work and skill with his hands.

When selecting a person to fill any position, there are two things which should be considered. The first is the ability to do the job, and the second is the effect of the selection upon the group. The first is rather obvious; if you want a typist, you select someone who can type, and this is, in fact, usually given first consideration. The second is not always so obvious a consideration and is often overlooked, especially when moving people within a work group. Suppose we take a few typical cases:

1. A new and improved press was brought into a printing department. None of the pressmen, mostly long-service men, had had experience with this type of press and it was decided to train one of them for it. One of the few short-service pressmen, a very alert and capable man, was selected for the new job. The group looked on the job as being a real opportunity in terms of both security and status, since the new press required more skill and might eventually displace some of the older ones. The selection of a short service man upset all the older men, who felt that, because of their service and experience, they should have been given the first chance at the job.

2. In a shop department the inspector's job was at the top of the informal job hierarchy. When a vacancy occurred the foreman selected an operator who was a hard worker but who was very unpopular with the group because of his unfriendly attitude and his unwillingness to help the others. The group thought the choice unfair and did everything they could to make the work difficult for this new inspector.

3. A machine department had a large group of old and highly skilled operators. They had group chiefs whose principal duties were of a minor supervisory nature, distributing work, checking upon individual jobs, keeping records, and see-

ing that raw materials were on hand. When one of these positions was open, a man was transferred in from another department instead of one being promoted from the ranks. The more ambitious men felt that they were being ignored and that one of them should have had the job. The skilled operators were annoyed at having someone over them who was unfamiliar with the work and who did not understand their problems and difficulties.

Sometimes selections are made because the foreman becomes interested or sympathetic with one person and thinks only of satisfying that person's needs without considering the effect upon the group. Some one worker talks to him about how much he wants to get ahead, and the foreman feels sympathetic; and the first time there is an opening at a better job, he puts that man in it. He forgets that there may be others in the group who feel just the same way; and because they have not talked to him, they have not caught his attention and interest. Or again, one fellow may complain that he has not had a raise in some time, that the cost of living has gone up, or that he has more family responsibilities, and if he has been doing a reasonably good job, the foreman is likely to be sympathetic and give him a raise, or extra overtime, or a chance at a better job. Whenever he does this, there are always others who feel that they deserve as much consideration and are being ignored. It is out of such incidents that the almost universal belief arises that "it is the squeaking axle that gets the grease."

Because they feel that the supply of foremen and executives cannot be left to chance, many large companies have programs for recruiting and training executive personnel. This usually means that they recruit people just out of college and put them through a special training which is not generally available. In many cases part of this training consists of a tour of duty in the shops, in which, in theory, they go into the shops and work at various jobs just as any other beginner would. They are not, however, left to their own devices in

climbing from there, but are moved around through various jobs and departments in order to give them a wide experience. Then when supervisory or executive jobs are open, they will be filled from this group. They are the privileged group, the "fair-haired boys," who will be the future executives. And the more management relies on such a group to fill their supervisory and executive positions, the less will be the opportunity for others to rise out of the ranks. All such plans for recruiting and training future executives indicate the significance of college training for the higher positions. Most if not all of such programs recruit almost entirely from college graduates. And certainly for those ambitious to rise above the rank of foreman, college training, whether in day or night school, is an important asset.

For successful adjustment as a shop worker, on the other hand, a college education seems to be no help. In fact, the person who has obtained a college education usually has ambitions far beyond a factory job, either because the college training itself stimulates such ambition or because the training is a result of the ambition. Thus the boy from a working family who makes the effort to get an education usually does so as a means of rising above his background. He wants to do better than his father, or his family is urging him on. And the boy whose family gives him an education as a matter of course already takes the higher status for granted. As a result both of these college graduates feel continually frustrated in shop jobs, are always explaining or justifying their position, and generally have difficulty in making adjustment. This condition is so well understood in industry that experienced employment interviewers usually differentiate people as shop types and office types, and they put all those with more than high-school education, unless it is some form of trade or skill training, into the office group. Even when conditions are such that college graduates are willing to take shop jobs, the companies prefer not to have them, because sooner or later they become dissatisfied and, unless there is the possibility of

promoting them fairly rapidly, they will become serious problems.

Adjustment to Promotion

The ambitious, mobile people who manage to rise through the structure must, of course, face problems of adjustment somewhat different from those of more stable people who settle down at about one level. For example, when a man is promoted to the supervisory level, he must make much more extensive adjustments than the man who moves from a semi-skilled to a skilled job. In the first place, his whole view of the work changes when he becomes a supervisor. He no longer thinks only of his own job, but every job in his group becomes his job and his responsibility in a sense. Also he must think of the other workers not just as his fellows but as people whom he must direct and supervise, encourage and discipline. If he is in charge of the group of which he was once a part, he finds that all his relationships with them change. If he continues to be intimate with his old friends, then the others accuse him of playing favorites; if he drops them, they say he is high-hat. All his social contacts are colored by the fact that he is now the boss, and the others act and talk with him differently because of it. He himself soon develops relationships with other supervisors; they may lunch with him or invite him to their parties, and he is gradually drawn into new circles of social activities.

This sort of adjustment goes on with every major change of rank or status and to some extent with every change of organization. This means that the mobile fellow who rises steadily, or who is shifted around to gain experience in various organizations, is continually adjusting to new concepts and points of view and to new sets of relationships with people. This even extends itself to his relationships in the community outside the plant. While he is a shop worker he usually lives in a working-class neighborhood and associates with other workers. As he rises through the ranks he moves to better neighborhoods and associates with different people.

Adjustment at Lower Levels

Fortunately everyone in industry does not have a strong mobility drive. Many people make good adjustment at even the bottom levels and are able to get satisfaction out of their jobs. This does not mean that they would not want better jobs, or that they will admit to a lack of ambition; but actually many are sufficiently well adjusted that they will not make the effort or take the chances necessary for going on to something better. This, however, is counter to the beliefs of many people, especially those who do have strong ambitions, who feel that everyone should be motivated just as they are. Thus many top executives, who have reached their positions because of their efforts and determination, believe that everyone feels as they do, and that everyone should respond to the same incentives that they responded to. As a result they believe that by holding out promises of opportunities for advancement they can motivate their people to work the way they have worked. They also tend to view with horror anything like a system of seniority rights which may stand in the way of the rapid advancement of ambitious youngsters, and they think that the bulk of the workers do or should feel the same way.

To be well adjusted in the lower-status positions or even the lowest-status position in a work group does not mean that the individual is insensitive to status differences. In fact, we continually meet with disturbances due to minor shifts in status relationships and with cases of anxiety over relative status. For example, to give a raise to one individual in a group causes reactions among the entire group, usually accompanied by demands for similar raises and by criticism of that individual and of the foreman. In one such case the men said that they were perfectly content with their wages and would have had no complaint if the foreman had not given one of the group a raise. We see the other side of this when an individual is demoted from supervision to the ranks, is moved to a lower-

status job, or has his pay cut. He almost always has a severe reaction, feels ashamed and embarrassed among his group, and may withdraw from contacts with them as much as possible. Sometimes an individual will quit his job entirely, even if it means taking an even worse job elsewhere, rather than face a loss of status within the same work group.

Stability versus Mobility

If we consider the people in industry in the light of what they are striving for, what satisfactions they are seeking, we can see two different tendencies. One, which is especially strong in the mobile individuals, is the desire to move from the position they are in to some other and higher status position in the structure. The other is the tendency to stay put, to retain their present position and protect it against changes; and this is found in those who have made a comfortable adjustment to their present place. Thus we might describe one group as trying to maintain their established pattern of activities and relationships, and the other as trying to take on a new pattern. Most people, however, are not completely one way or the other, but only predominantly so; and people sometimes change their goals. Through his life-cycle an individual may pass from one phase to another. He may start out anxious to rise out of the youngster group in terms of job, pay, and status; he moves up a bit in the structure, reaches a level which satisfies his needs and to which he can adjust comfortably, and then stops pushing and settles down. In the first period he will be upset over lack of progress in too stable a situation, and will complain about the boredom and monotony when he feels that he is not progressing adequately. After he has settled down he will prefer stable relations, will not be bothered by routines and monotony, and will be reluctant to make changes. This cycle is often expressed in comments to the effect that young men want opportunity and older men want security.

SYMPTOMS OF DISTURBANCE

Closely allied with the whole problem of the adjustment of the individual is the significance of complaints and grievances. In general we can say that most complaints are expressions of some disturbance in the individual's relationships either at work or elsewhere. In an exhaustive study of the complaints expressed in interviews with 20,000 employees, Roethlisberger and Dickson found three classes of complaints.¹ The first referred to objects or conditions which could be clearly seen and agreed upon, as, for example, a broken tool or a burnt-out light bulb. Second were those referring to experiences or conditions which cannot be clearly seen and agreed upon, such as, "The room is too hot," "The light is poor," or "The work is too heavy." Third are complaints which are not referring to verifiable external conditions but are expressions of the sentiments of the person, such as, complaints about wages, supervision, or advancement. They also found that a large portion of the complaints, in fact the things about which people seemed most disturbed, were in the third group, things that could not be seen and agreed upon and which could not be dealt with directly as you deal with a burned-out lamp. They found, further, that with any of the complaints, the things complained about were not always the actual causes of the disturbances; they were the symptoms, the outward expressions of some underlying problem or disturbance. Thus to understand any complaint it is necessary to understand the latent content of the complaint; it is necessary to know what the complainant is really talking about, what is really "eating on him." This presents a problem in understanding and diagnosis which is a major problem in dealing with these complaints. If a worker complains about his machine when his real trouble is that his foreman is pressing him to turn out more work, it does not do any good to "prove" to him that there is nothing wrong with the machine.

¹Roethlisberger and Dickson, *Management and the Worker*, pp. 255-69.

One of the interesting features of complaints about wages is that a surprisingly large number of them are merely symptoms of some underlying conditions, and many of them are not cured by wage increases. We are so prone to take for granted the idea that everyone wants more money that we often fail to look below the surface on such complaints. We forget to ask ourselves, "What is he really griping about?" Yet time and again we meet with cases in which Jim wants more money because Joe got a raise, or because he feels that his foreman does not give the proper recognition for his years of service, or because in some other way the raise would symbolize status or other satisfaction he is seeking, and not because of any real need for the money. If we try to cure such complaints merely by manipulating wages, we find that we are only treating the symptoms and do not cure the disease.

Often the complaints about the most obvious of external conditions may be indicative of some disturbance of the individual. The individual who is satisfied with his job and his life in general tends to accept things which to another may seem intolerable. He may take for granted dirty surroundings, poor tools, or other conditions as long as they do not symbolize inadequacies or frustrations in his adjustment either at work or outside. But the frustrated worker may complain about these same conditions which the other takes for granted as part of the work situation. For this reason it is important to treat complaints as symptoms; and even though the thing complained about can be and is corrected, it should not be assumed that the complainant will be satisfied.

Since complaints usually represent some disturbance in the equilibrium of the individual, they appear most often when a person is worried or anxious. Status anxieties, for example, are usually accompanied by all kinds of complaints about the work and the work situation as well as about relations with other workers and superiors. And though some complaints may be merely expressions of momentary or superficial annoy-

ances, many are expressions of serious maladjustment and are part of a complex pattern of disturbances

While a complaint in itself is often unimportant, the conditions of which it is a symptom are of serious import to the individual as a worker. Investigation has clearly proved that anxiety from any cause tends to reduce efficiency of the worker no matter how satisfactory the job and the work situation may be. Actually such findings agree with the experiences which most of us have had from time to time. Almost everyone can remember an occasion when anxiety over some home conditions, a quarrel with family or superiors, or worry about some difficult decision has prevented him from putting his full attention on his job and may even have reduced him temporarily to a state where he just could not work at all. Thus any serious disturbance may produce a state of what Roethlisberger and Dickson refer to as "morbid preoccupation," in which the individual is so preoccupied or wrapped up in his worries about some personal situation that he cannot do his work.² You might say that his mind withdraws from consideration of the work and goes round and round on this other problem; and in a severe case he may develop other symptoms such as nervousness, inability to sit still, inability to concentrate enough to read, trembling hands, avoidance of others, loss of appetite, and insomnia.

Such morbid preoccupations are not limited to any level in the organization, and are not affected by status and education of the individual. It is often asserted that such behavior is an expression of low intelligence or lack of education and that it is not found, therefore, among college graduates, engineers, and others that have been trained to think. In general such assertions come from successful executives who have reached a very satisfactory level of attainment and adjustment and are no longer subject to such disturbances. Actually such conditions are found to exist at every level and often seem to interfere more with the work of those who work with ideas

²*Op. cit.*, p. 292.

than those who work with their hands, for many shop jobs are so much a matter of manual routines that they require very little conscious attention.

Since the anxieties and preoccupations are part of a pattern of personal disequilibrium, they may appear whenever an individual must make a new adjustment either at work or outside. And since most work situations are constantly undergoing changes of some sort, they appear to be very productive of anxieties and the accompanying complaints. This is so clear that, knowing what changes will occur, it is possible to predict the areas of disturbance even down to the particular individuals and their probable reactions. Thus a proposed change in organization, in which a certain department will be removed from one division chief's authority and given to another, will probably make the first one feel that he has lost status and make him wonder if his superior thinks he is not capable of handling such a big job. At the same time, the department chief who is being moved will probably have some anxieties about the new boss and will wonder what he will expect of the department. While in many cases the disturbances are only momentary and adjustment takes place rapidly, nevertheless there is almost always some touch of anxiety or uncertainty created by the change. Often the actual emotional adjustment is made before the change itself takes place; that is, the individual is able to adjust his attitudes and expectations toward the new conditions between the time that an anticipated change is announced and the time when it actually takes place. In other cases the adjustment may be very gradual and sometimes it extends over a period of months during which there are continual complaints and anxieties.

Not only are the complaints symptomatic of the anxieties accompanying such changes, but they often seem to play an important role in the adjustment of the individual. Apparently the free statement of the fears and anxieties provides some relief to the individual, and the more effectively he can voice his feelings, the more easily he makes the necessary adjustment.

Furthermore, when the change is one affecting the entire group, the "griping" seems to give the individual a feeling of support from his fellows, a feeling that they are all in it together and all feel the same way about it. Then as the adjustment begins to take place, the complaints begin to dwindle away and the individual gradually fits into the new pattern. There is, in fact, a rough cycle of adjustment which all individuals and groups seem to go through. First is the period of disturbance characterized by a lot of anxiety and complaining. Next the complaints dwindle and the individuals begin to talk more constructively about the meaning of the change and to think about the actions they may take in meeting the change. Finally there is the period of adjustment and settling down to the new equilibrium. In any change, therefore, the complaints should be viewed as part of the normal process and should not be repressed. Instead they should be brought out into the open where they can be watched for evidence of more serious disturbances than have been anticipated.

CHAPTER IX

THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ORGANIZATION

MANAGEMENT'S CONCEPT OF THE ORGANIZATION

The industrial relations or personnel organization has a peculiar function which often makes its role a difficult one. Fundamentally its function is similar to that of all other staff organizations; that is, it exists in order to make the total system work better, and it is expected that the factory will be a better running, more effective organization because of it. The real difficulties arise out of its particular area of endeavor, the things which are expected of it, and the limitations of its tools.

To go back to the purpose of the factory organization, we see that it is a complicated mechanism set up to produce goods. In this system every element is co-ordinated to those productive ends. The line, the staff, the control organizations are all concerned one way or another with the problem of getting the work out. In such a system the individual may be seen as part of the productive effort, another type of tool, and he is judged in terms of his effectiveness in the system. Furthermore, the things of importance to the individual, the satisfactions he is seeking all tend to play second fiddle to the needs of the organization. Thus the normal working of the factory organization tends to create problems of individual frustration, dissatisfaction, and maladjustment, which in turn interfere with the effectiveness of the productive system. This interference may come about through excessive internal friction, high turnover, constant complaints, strikes, or work stoppages. Once management becomes aware of such difficulties, it begins to think about ways of improving work morale and co-operation; and out of this a personnel organization often develops.

Counteracting Dissatisfactions

An industrial relations organization and its activities are generally expected to counteract and deal with the human dis-

satisfactions and disturbances which interfere with the work. In some cases management holds a somewhat oversimplified concept of the sources of dissatisfactions and of their cure, and may limit the treatment accordingly. In some cases, for example, management believes that economic insecurity is the main source of disturbances and provides employee sick benefits and pensions as an antidote. In other cases they feel that they can improve morale and co-operation through economic motivations, and so they provide wage incentives, bonuses, or profit-sharing plans. In still other cases they may think that the only problem lies in selecting the proper kind of employees and so pin their hopes on better employment methods. In none of these cases do they have an industrial relations organization as it is usually thought of, but only an employment office or a few individuals handling details of a benefit or incentive plan.

Since a personnel organization is primarily concerned with developing good employee relations, it is concerned with the individual, and is directing its attention to his attitudes and needs. Thus its point of view is quite different from that of the other organizations which are primarily interested in getting the work done and, therefore, subordinate the needs of the individual to the needs of the job. Personnel people are bothered when foremen fail to consider the feelings of individual workers, when they expect workers to adjust to the job and to accept their decisions without complaint or dissatisfaction. They have a feeling that management and all levels of supervision fail to make use of the point of view and understanding of the personnel organization, that they have a blind spot when it comes to employee relations. This same feeling exists to some extent, of course, in all organizations and especially in all staff organizations, but it seems to be especially strong among personnel people. This is probably due to the fact that they are the only group which is more concerned with people than with production, and which, therefore, looks at the whole system from a unique angle.

The importance of good employee relations has become increasingly apparent today under the present conditions of wartime labor shortage, dislocations due to conversion and expansion, and similar conditions. Companies which had drifted along for years with a high degree of stability both in operating conditions and personnel, suddenly find that the old formulas for good employee relations are not working so well under the impact of drastic changes. They are faced with terrific rates of turnover, low morale, strikes, and frictions which would have seemed unbelievable before; and they have recognized the need for an organization devoted to dealing with these human problems. As a result there are new personnel organizations sprouting all over the industrial landscape and old organizations expanding at an unprecedented rate.

As an Antidote to Unions

In many cases these new organizations are thought of by management as an antidote to unions and as a means to avoid or make unnecessary a union organization. This is not, of course, a wartime phenomenon but one which usually increases in periods of unsettled labor conditions. In such cases the problem of employee morale is approached by trying to give the workers the same sort of concessions, in such things as wages or working conditions, as they might expect to gain through a union. Companies with this idea may plan elaborate benefit programs, pay liberal wages, and improve working conditions; and along with this their industrial relations organizations may be expected to impress the workers with the fairness and munificence of management. They may be expected to show how favorably the wages compare with those of other companies, how liberal the benefits are, or how pleasant the working conditions. They may be expected to "sell" management and its point of view to the workers, and to "interpret" policies and practices, which means presenting management's logics in such a way that the workers will accept them. In these cases, too, there is a feeling that the workers just do not

understand. Therefore, one of the duties of the industrial relations organization is to figure out ways of presenting the company's point of view through bulletins, pamphlets, employee magazines, lectures, and so on. All this is done in the firm belief that, if the workers are presented with the concepts, if the workers are properly educated, they will sympathize and agree with management.

When this kind of thing is expected of them, the personnel people find themselves in a difficult position. If they feel strongly identified with management and accept and agree with its reasoning, they find that they are looked on as management's stooges who do nothing but give the workers a lot of empty talk. They often feel that they are pushing constantly against an inert mass of worker attitudes, and become convinced that the workers are a stupid lot who will not listen to reason. And the more indifference they meet on the part of the workers, the more management criticizes them for being ineffective. Thus they find themselves caught between pressure and criticism from management and the dislike and resistance of the workers. This is a situation which is sure-fire for producing severe feelings of frustration and anxiety among personnel people.

More frequently, however, management does not think of "selling" the company to the workers as the principal duty of its personnel organization. Often it really believes that the workers have legitimate reasons for complaints and dissatisfactions and that something should be done about them. In such cases they think that the personnel organization's function is to find the sources of dissatisfaction and either correct them directly or bring them to the attention of management. If the company is opposed to unions, it hopes to reduce the employees' feeling of need for a union by constant attention to these complaints; and in effect it tries to take over the functions of a union. With this approach the personnel people are inevitably identified with the attitudes of the workers and their sympathies are with the individual. In this situation they

are able to maintain better relations with the workers who may recognize their sympathetic interest and good intentions. At the same time, the personnel people find themselves in the difficult position of being critical of management and the supervisors. In effect they see things through the workers' eyes and evaluate everything in terms of its impact upon the workers. They are critical of the foreman who, in trying to get the work out, fails to consider the feelings of the workers, makes excessive demands on them, or is irritable with them. They are critical of the company if its policies and practices seem to run counter to the sentiments of the workers. They are continually upset about poor supervision and about the inadequate communication of workers' problems up the line.

These critical attitudes often lead to friction and suspicion between foremen and personnel people. The foremen feel that the personnel people are prone to accept as fact every complaint from a worker, and that they judge things without seeing the entire picture, and especially without seeing the foreman's problems. This feeling increases when the lower ranks of the personnel organization are filled with college people who have little or no shop experience. At the same time the personnel organization is frequently a channel of communication through which criticisms of the foreman may go up the line. Thus he feels that they are a group who see only the workers' side of any question and who are critical of him to his superiors without giving him a fair chance to defend himself. As a result there is often a great deal of antagonism in the relations between foremen and personnel people even though it is usually kept veiled behind a polite and friendly exterior.

Even though management thinks of it as a channel for the communication and adjustment of employee complaints and grievances, the personnel organization has difficulty in functioning in a way that is satisfactory to the employees. Certainly it can never actually replace a union in handling complaints. In the first place, since it is actually an agent of man-

agement and a part of the structure which is devised by management, it is not primarily an agent of the workers which is sanctioned by the workers. As a result it can exert only as much influence or pressure in settling problems as management will accept. If it is too militant in its defense of the workers' point of view, management may get annoyed and "cut its throat." If management wants to delay decisions, the personnel organization cannot insist on a hearing; if management refuses to settle a grievance to the satisfaction of the group, there is nothing the organization can do about it. In short, when it comes to a showdown, the personnel people have no effective ways of putting the pressure on management; they can quit or be fired, but they cannot call a strike. For this reason they often do not know how far they dare go in pressing an issue for fear of ruining their relations with their superiors; and they are frequently in a state of anxiety over the way management will judge them and their work. As a result, the workers may think of them as sympathetic friends who will try to settle their grievances, but they do not think of them as the fellows who will carry their complaints right on up the line, the ones who can really go to bat for them.

There have been experiments from time to time in which management has tried to set up a personnel organization which could actually substitute for a union in handling employee complaints. In one such experiment the main element of the personnel organization was a staff of people called counselors, who were assigned to keep in close touch with all employees, to take up any complaints, and see that they were settled satisfactorily. They were instructed to think of themselves as shop stewards who were representing the workers and not management. During a period of about two years these counselors found themselves constantly in a position of criticizing the foremen and carrying their criticisms clear up to the top of the structure. They were also frequently criticizing top management for the effects of its policies. There was a constant turnover in the personnel organization, morale was low, and

there was a general anxiety over the situation. At the end of two years the plan was virtually discarded; there was a drastic reorganization among supervisors and staff, and practically the whole personnel force was eliminated.

As a rule personnel organizations are not expected to take such extreme positions in the problem of dealing with employee complaints. Those whose activities are primarily administration of benefit plans or employee services often have duties sufficiently clear-cut that they can do their jobs without becoming involved in conflicts with the line or with other parts of the structure. This is especially true of employment people whose sole duty is the selection and hiring of employees, and who have no further contact with them. People in such positions can frequently live in relative isolation from the turmoil of the factory.

Areas of Activity

Since the personnel organization is primarily concerned with the problems of individual workers, most of their attention is directed to those phases of the work situation which frequently cause disturbance. Roughly the problems of workers and, therefore, the functions of the personnel organization can be divided into four types: those involved in (1) the induction of new employees, (2) advancement through the structure, (3) adjustment to change, and (4) serious personal crises. Although this may seem an oversimplified classification of workers' problems, it does define the principal areas in which personnel organizations can and often do function effectively.

PROBLEMS OF THE NEW EMPLOYEE

In a factory as in any other social organization there is a problem of whom to accept as members of the group, and there are usually highly formalized procedures by means of which the new individuals are selected and inducted into the organization. In college fraternities there is a cycle of induction beginning with "rush week." The newcomers are looked

over by the different organizations, then each club votes on the various prospects and "bids" the ones they have selected. With the acceptance of the "bids" there are various social activities and ceremonies designed to bring the newcomer into the group. Next comes a period of trial or apprenticeship, and finally there are elaborate initiation ceremonies which make the newcomer a full-fledged member of the organization. The normal procedures of employment in industry have some of the same features of initiation as fraternities. The newcomer appears at the employment office where he is put through certain routines, or we might call them stages in the selection ritual, in which he talks to various people, fills out papers, takes tests, and so on, all to the end of deciding whether the organization wants him as a member. Once he is chosen he may go through an induction process which involves talking with personnel people about the company and its rules and regulations, or he may go directly to his new supervisor who talks with him about the job, or he may merely be put to work without any talk or explanation. Then he goes through a period of learning the work and the people with whom he is working. They may put him through their own initiation, "kidding" him, telling him tall tales, and playing practical jokes on him; or they may take him in very readily and accept him as a part of the group after only a very brief period of getting acquainted; or they may ignore him and hold him off at a distance until he gradually breaks down the barriers and becomes one of them.

Selection of Workers

A factory, however, is different from a fraternity in that it is organized for the production of goods and not merely for the satisfaction of its members. In keeping with this general objective, the selection and induction procedures in a factory are methods of obtaining people who will best contribute to the productive aims of the organization. Furthermore, these procedures are set up and sanctioned by management, and they

are expected to operate according to the concepts of management. Thus the selection is directed toward satisfying management's ideas of what is a good worker rather than toward satisfying the workers' ideas of whom they want to work with.

The concepts underlying the average methods of selection are similar in some respects to the concepts involved in selecting a machine. They think of the individual in terms of his ability to do the work, his dexterity, skill, experience, knowledge of the work, health, and so on. They give him tests designed to measure his basic abilities or his learned skills. They interview him to find out what jobs he has done in the past. They give him physical examinations to see if he is in good health and physically able to do the work. They check with former employers to learn if he has actually had the experience which he claims and to see if he was a stable and satisfactory worker. And finally they sometimes give consideration to the question of whether he will be acceptable to the group and make adequate adjustment to the job as a social situation.

It is rare to find selection procedures set up to examine the individual's real ability to adjust to the social system of the factory. Some testing programs are built around the assumption that an adequate adjustment of the individual depends upon his being placed on work which is fitted to his basic abilities, and that by proper testing and placement the problems of employee morale and adjustment will be solved automatically. There does not seem to be any significant relationship between such factors as mechanical aptitude, dexterity, or intelligence, and the satisfactions the individual is seeking and what he expects from the job. Thus the individual who is in ability better fitted to be a machine operator than an executive does not automatically make adjustment when put on a machine. This is well shown in the cases of children from professional or executive families whose whole background gives them expectations which prevent effective adjustment to shop jobs regardless of their particular abilities. Furthermore, ability

to do the work well does not mean that an individual will achieve a comfortable acceptance into the group, and without this he is apt to be dissatisfied. In other words, the "square peg in the round hole" theory of individual maladjustment, which is propounded by many experts in testing, is certainly inadequate if the only measures of "squareness" are the commonly used aptitude tests.

Initiation of Workers

In comparing the employment routines of the average company with the initiation processes of a fraternity, we see certain things lacking which are of considerable importance to the individual. When he is hired, he is put through all those elaborate processes for determining his fitness to belong; but it is often done with about as much real interest in him as the purchasing department has in a new machine which it inspects and tests. Furthermore, when he is finally accepted, he may be dropped into the job without further ado; often nothing is done to make him feel that he is really a welcome member of the group or of the company, and he is quite apt to be ignored. Now compare this to what happens when he joins a club. Once he is accepted he is well received and made to feel that he is a member of the group. He may go through certain initiations but they serve to make him aware of the group and of his place in it. He is introduced to everyone; they tell him how glad they are to have him, and what a wonderful group it is, and how much he will like it. The old-timers want to get acquainted and make an effort to see that he feels at home. In fact, the whole organization acts to make him feel that he belongs. But after his first day at work in a factory, he often feels that it is a cold and unfriendly place, that he is just an unimportant atom in a big indifferent machine.

Personnel Organization's Role

In some companies attention has been given to this problem, and there are regular induction procedures for the new

employees. Booklets or other material for new employees are usually prepared which are designed to stimulate interest and answer questions. This may be coupled with a tour of the plant, lectures on safety, company rules, or other matters, and there may be other efforts to make him feel that he belongs. Such activities are usually carried out by the personnel organization, either through the employment office or through some other department working in conjunction with it, and in general such efforts are well received. These initial efforts may be followed by personal interviews a few days or a week or so after the new employee starts on his job. There are, however, certain limitations to what the personnel organization can do in the induction of the new employee. It is a staff organization which sits off to one side and with which the employee may have only periodic contact once he has been inducted; and it is not, therefore, a significant part of his daily social environment. The group into which he must fit is the group with which he works, the supervisors and the fellow-workers, and it is into this group that he must be integrated. Thus no matter how carefully the personnel people may prepare him and try to make him feel welcome, he will still be in an unfriendly world if the other workers receive him coldly. And no matter how the personnel people may build up the company and paint a picture of idyllic conditions and friendly management, he will probably believe that it is an awful place to work if the other workers tell him so. But if the workers and supervisors are friendly and try to make him feel welcome, if they help him with his difficulties from the moment he starts on the job, and if they think it is a good place to work, he will go home with a feeling that he really belongs, certain that he will like his job and get along well on it. For that reason no formalized efforts on the part of personnel people can be nearly as effective in the integration of a new employee as the influence of his work group.

Most formal efforts for the induction of new employees are too concerned either with informing the individual or with

"selling" him the company. They supply him with pamphlets to read, they explain this and that, and zealous personnel people give him "pep talks" about the wonders of the company and the importance of their work. He is all too often flooded with information which he can neither remember nor digest. All this approach overlooks the fact that the new employee is apt to be overwhelmed by the strangeness and newness of the scene. He is often so concerned over what the job will be like and whether he can handle it, that he does not remember much of what he hears. When this is understood, there is no reason to be surprised or annoyed if a week or so later the new employee has forgotten all the things so carefully explained to him the first day.

Foreman and New Employee

Since the new employee is apt to feel lonely and uncertain during his first few days on the job, it is important that he be encouraged and reassured. If the foreman is very busy, he is apt to put the new man on a job and leave him to his fate without instruction or help. Sometimes these employees complain that their foreman does not see them for a day or two after they start, which leaves them feeling neglected and anxious about the work. If the employee is working as part of a close group, the other workers may give him the necessary advice and reassurance. In any case there should be someone responsible for seeing that he gets acquainted with others and has some reassurance about the job. The foreman is the ideal person to do this, since he is the one to whom the employee looks for encouragement or criticism.

It has been clearly recognized during the present critical shortage of manpower that the customary methods of training new workers are quite inadequate. All too often they have been left to their own devices to learn the job "the hard way," which also means the slow way. Recently a variety of training programs have been developed, of which the most famous is the Job Instruction Training developed by the Training within

Industry branch of the War Manpower Commission. In this program the foremen are trained in methods of instructing the new worker. This method requires that the foreman study the job carefully and break it down into steps which can be taught the worker. Not only is it a very systematic method of training the worker, but it also requires that the foreman give considerable attention to the worker in applying it. To use this method the foreman cannot just spend fifteen minutes with the worker and then go off and leave him, but he must take him through the operation step by step, and then return and check it over from time to time. This gives the worker the benefit of the attention and reassurance of the foreman during the time when he most needs it, as well as giving him a start on the job which will relieve his anxieties over whether he will be able to do it properly.

SYSTEMS OF PROMOTION

The problem of getting ahead is of considerable concern to many workers, as pointed out in our earlier discussion of individual problems. This is especially true of the younger men who start at the bottom of the wage system and are eager to earn enough to support a wife and family. While among the older workers there are more who have reached a satisfactory level of attainment, there are still many who feel blocked and frustrated. Also, even among the ones who have settled down at one level, the opportunities and methods of advancement are still of interest, and a policy of promotion which seems unfair can seriously hurt the morale of the group. For that reason some large companies have tried to formalize the system of promotion so that each person can know the channels through which he may rise. In some cases elaborate charts are prepared showing just where each job stands in relation to others and the lines along which promotions are made. With such a system under the control of the personnel organization it is apparently quite simple to fill a vacancy by selecting a man from the appropriate spot in the line of promotions.

In the ideal operation of such a plan one promotion near the top of the job hierarchy would result in a chain of promotions until finally a new man would be hired for the bottom job.

These promotional plans, which are usually set up and administered by the industrial relations organization, give the impression of a very orderly system in which the individual knows just where he stands and how he can get ahead. They are generally thought of as being very useful as an incentive, since a personnel man or supervisor can show a worker just how by hard work and faithful application he can move up the ladder. Where they are emphasized, however, the people in any one position come to feel that they have a vested right to the job above them in the promotional system, and if such a vacancy is filled from some other source there is a serious reaction. This makes it difficult to take care of surplus people through lateral transfers, to shift the versatile workers around, or to continue to promote the exceptional individuals who have reached a ceiling in a limited field but who have potentialities for some other type of work. When adhered to rigidly, such a system becomes a strait-jacket which prevents easy adjustment to fluctuations of activity or to exceptional circumstances.

The other extreme, having no promotional system but just leaving it up to the foremen and department chiefs to handle each case on its merits, becomes a sort of free-for-all in which each man must look out for himself. With this system, or lack of system, those who are outstanding in performance or who make a good impression on their superiors can move very rapidly; and for the very mobile people, those who are very anxious to get ahead, it may offer much more incentive than a more rigid and formalized system. However, indiscriminate promotions of this kind, which usually mean promotion of the younger, short-service people, often make the older people feel that they are pushed aside and forgotten and gives rise to complaints of favoritism and discrimination on the part of the supervisors. Such complaints always disturb the personnel people, who see in them another instance of the foreman's lack

of understanding, of the way he abuses his power and creates unnecessary problems. And since they are charged with improving employee relations, they feel that there should be a system whereby they can control the foremen and prevent such unfair occurrences.

The real problem, especially for large organizations, is how to have a promotional system or policy which will work reasonably well both from the point of view of management and supervision and from the point of view of the workers. Management is usually opposed to a rigid system and prefers one which is sufficiently flexible that it can be readily adjusted to changes in conditions. The workers want a system which will fit their ideas of fairness and they generally prefer a flexible system as long as it meets this requirement. If they distrust management or the supervisors, however, they may feel that they can expect fair treatment only through a rigid system or fixed rules. This often leads to demands for seniority rules covering promotions, which assures the old-timers of being given their chance and not being side-tracked for some youngster who is the favorite of the foreman.

HELPING THE INDIVIDUAL TO ADJUST

Most large factories present a picture of constant changes of one sort or another. There are technological changes of machines and processes, changes in products, changes in organization, changes in personnel, and changes in relationships among individuals. This means that the individuals are frequently making new adjustments which vary from that involved in learning a new skill to that of assuming a new position in the status system. As we have seen, every major change in his situation may mean a serious problem of adjustment for the individual; and the ease and speed of readjustment depends largely upon the meaning of the change for the individual and his attitude toward it. Thus changes which involve loss of status usually result in severe emotional reactions, and adjustment may be slow and painful. Furthermore, many

changes which appear to be minor on the surface may be interpreted by the individual as a threat to his status or security, and he may react to them accordingly. Bringing a new improved machine into a department, for example, may not directly affect the work of the operators of the old machines, but they may look on it as a threat to their positions and skill. Such situations present some delicate problems to either personnel men or supervisors in helping the individuals to adjust.

Technological Change

Technological changes give rise to many adjustment problems. In many companies the engineers are originating a continual stream of changes in products, machines, and processes. These changes are designed to improve the product or reduce the costs, and they generally mean a simplification of processes or the introduction of more automatic machinery. Such changes may affect the individual in a number of ways. They may eliminate his job entirely and force him to learn a new job; they may reduce the number of workers needed and force him out of a job; or they may result in extensive transfers of people, substituting women for men or low-skilled jobs for high-skilled. One factory, for example, used a large volume of nickel-plated parts, which required many skilled polishers to polish the parts before and after plating. A change in design, which changed the finish on most of the parts to a black enamel instead of nickel plate, eliminated most of the polishers and substituted a few sprayers. This meant that a large group of skilled polishers, some of whom had spent fifteen or twenty years in the work, had to be absorbed into other types of work in other departments. Since most of them were not experienced in other work, they had to be transferred to less skilled jobs with a cut in rates. This meant that the skill they had spent years in acquiring and in which they took considerable pride was no longer of value. Also the group in which they had spent years was broken up. Thus they had to learn new skills; they had to adjust to lower earn-

ings; and they had to adjust to the change from a work group of which they had been a part for a long time, and in which they had high status because of their skill and experience, to groups in which they were new, inexperienced, and of low status.

Even where technological change does not substitute lower skilled people for the highly skilled, it often substitutes one skill for another. For example, if in the manufacturing of an intricate part die-casting is substituted for machining, skilled die-cast operators may replace equally skilled machine operators. This means that for that particular job the machine operators are displaced even though there might be no actual reduction in the number of skilled workers needed. In some cases there may actually be a substitution of more highly skilled people for those displaced, although this is rare and usually means a sharp reduction in total numbers needed. In general we can say that for a given quantity of goods produced the technological improvements tend to reduce the average level of skill required and the number of people required.

One technological change which has important effect upon the workers is the trend toward work simplification. One of the important methods for reducing costs and improving quality is to reduce the work to a series of relatively simple operations which require little skill. Inexperienced people can then be trained readily to do one operation very efficiently without being able to do the entire sequence. Thus instead of skilled workers who can handle every step of the work from beginning to end, and who may perform a series of varied operations, there are semi-skilled workers who do one operation over and over and develop great dexterity and speed on it. This is only possible in the mass production of identical products, of course, but it is a common situation in most large industries. This reduces the importance of the highly skilled operators who can handle all kinds of machines and it also reduces the opportunities for learning these skills. Instead the

worker is apt to spend his life on the routine semi-skilled jobs and be frequently shifted from one to another.

In some cases this trend has had the effect of breaking the skill hierarchy into two groups, a mass of low-skilled workers who operate the machines and perform fairly simple operations, and the highly-skilled group who build and service the machines and tools they use. In the extreme development there are engineers, tool designers, and skilled tool-makers producing better and better machines and tools which require operators with less and less skill. Thus there is quite a gap between the two levels, so that an operator cannot rise by gradual steps as he acquires experience on the job, but can rise only through special education and training outside the plant. A very important analysis of this process is given in a study of the shoe industry in a New England community by W. Lloyd Warner and Josiah O. Low.¹ In this study they show how the technological developments in the shoe industry have changed the pattern, so that it no longer provides a simple hierarchy through which the youngster can move up gradually to a level of high skill and so acquire a respected place in the community. Instead he must either start in the shoe factory where there is almost no opportunity for progress or else he must acquire technical education and become an engineer, tool designer, or skilled tool-maker who designs and makes the tools and machines used in the factory.

Organizational Changes

Another problem of individual adjustment results from the changes in organization or structure which management originates. Management is always interested in changing its organization so that it will work better, or so that it will meet changing conditions of one sort or another. Many of these are changes in formal organization at a level which affects the supervisory structure and may involve the shifting of departments from one division to another without changing the

¹To be published as Vol. IV of the Yankee City Series, Yale University Press

actual work. Changes which have much more direct impact on the work level are those involving reorganization of the work or regrouping of the jobs, change of physical location, and so on. At whatever level such changes take place, it must be remembered that the people, even though they be top executives, must make an adjustment to the new state of affairs.

At the supervisory and executive level these organizational changes are often interpreted as affecting the status relationships of those involved, and this may result in serious reactions and anxieties. To take a department away from one division chief and place it with another, for example, may be interpreted as loss of prestige for one and a gain for the other; and the one who has lost status may show anxiety over the reasons for the move and his standing with top management. Even when such moves are obviously logical from the organizational point of view, there will probably be some such reactions unless the superiors give great reassurance. And even if he has been reassured about the meaning of the move, the division chief who has lost a department knows that everyone at his level and below will comment on the change and wonder if it means that he is "slipping."

Reorganization at the higher level often means little to the workers, since such changes can be accomplished without changing the work or the work location. But when the changes mean that the work units are shifted around, they become directly significant to the workers. One company, for example, made a change in its accounting organization which broke up large accounting units in a central location into small units in shop location. This removed the members of the organization from the preferred office location and put them in the lower-status shop environment. It also separated them into small groups isolated from each other, and broke up many of their cliques and social activities which they had carried on as one large group. Furthermore, they were in much less frequent contact with their superiors and felt that they were isolated and ignored. The adjustment to this change required several

months, during which time there were continual complaints about the change, about the poor working conditions, the noise and dirt in the new location, the isolation from higher supervisors, anxieties about being lost in the shop, and many similar expressions of disturbance.

The adjustment to all these changes presents a very difficult problem from the point of view of management. In every case where there is serious disturbance, the effectiveness of the individual or even the entire organization is reduced for a time and in some cases permanently. Nevertheless such changes are often unavoidable, and the problem is how to handle them so that there will be a minimum of disturbance and the quickest possible adjustment. Often by failing to anticipate the disturbance, by thinking of the people as though they were inanimate objects which would not react to such changes, management fails to take the reaction into its calculations and does things in such a way as to increase disturbances. In many cases proper attention to the individuals will reduce anxieties and pave the way for rapid adjustment. In other cases modification of the proposed changes will remove the features which give rise to the most serious reactions. In general, to announce an important change without preparing those involved beforehand increases disturbances; but if it has been discussed in advance and the subordinates have been able to express their ideas and have had some hand in the planning, then they become adjusted to the idea and accept it more readily. In any case the superiors should anticipate the way their subordinates will react and give increased attention to them during the change and the period of adjustment. In no case should it be assumed that by giving a simple logical reason for the change the disturbance can be avoided. Explanations play a useful role in the adjustment but they should be accompanied by increased sympathetic attention from the superiors. Unfortunately in many cases the intermediate levels, such as department and division chiefs, are just as disturbed as the foreman

or workers, and because of their own feelings are unable to give attention to their subordinates and to reassure them.

Functions of Personnel Organization

Since all these changes give rise to disturbances and create problems of adjustment, it is important that there be constant effort to anticipate their effects and to work out means of speeding adjustment. The personnel organization is in a key position to analyze changes, advise management on how to prevent undue disturbances, and to aid in the process of individual adjustment. To do this, however, personnel people must have a thorough understanding of the social organization and how it will be affected by changes. They must do more than point out the danger of changes; they must also be able to make constructive suggestions for dealing with the problems.

Unfortunately many personnel organizations lack the understanding necessary to do this well. Often they do little more than point with alarm or complain about mistakes after they have been made. In many cases, too, their relationship with management is such that they are not consulted about proposed changes but are merely expected to straighten things out after they have gone wrong. Until these limitations, both in knowledge and relationships, can be overcome, the average personnel organization will find itself ineffective in dealing with these problems.

Placement Organizations

Transfers are one type of change which some companies try to control through the personnel organization. In any large plant which produces a wide variety of products there are fluctuations in activities in various departments, which, from time to time, produce a surplus of workers in some while there is a shortage in others. In other cases technological changes may require some shifting of workers. In a small plant this can be watched and controlled very easily on an informal basis. But in a large plant with many departments one

may not even know that there is a surplus of people in another; and without some system of control there is apt to be a situation in which one department is laying off people while another is hiring new people from outside. To avoid this a placement organization is often set up which organizes the shifting of people from one job to another, keeps records of any surplus or shortage of people, and tries to fill openings with people from within the plant. In some cases the placement department has the responsibility of actually finding places for surplus people, explaining transfers and new jobs to the individuals, and handling the entire process. In a system of this sort, when a foreman needs more people, he notifies the placement organization, and if there are any workers available, they are brought over for him to interview.

The work of the placement organization is often extended to handling cases of individuals who are dissatisfied with their jobs and want a change. They may also administer a promotional system; when openings occur they see that selection is made from the proper group, and they even participate in the selection. In such a case they become the group in personnel to which the individual may turn when he is dissatisfied, when he wants to escape from an unpleasant job or an unfriendly foreman, when he wants a better paying job or more opportunity.

A competent placement organization is often quite important from the points of view of both management and the workers. Through the proper handling of surplus help and the handling of individual dissatisfactions, they can often reduce turnover considerably. This is especially true in normal times when there is no difficulty in hiring people to fill any needs, so that an individual foreman, without a placement organization, would have no hesitancy in laying off extra help even though other departments might be hiring.

The general plan of placement work seems simple. The main function is to keep track of the jobs which need people and the people who need jobs, and to fill one with the other.

It must, however, be realized that people cannot be moved around according to some master plan the way a planning engineer moves machines. People are affected by the way the move takes place, by the meaning it has for them, and by their attitudes toward both the old job and the new; and their success or failure in the new job depends upon all these factors. Every move means the adjustment of an individual to a new job and a new human environment. From the point of view of the workers the effectiveness of placement work depends upon the consideration given to these human factors and upon the aid given during the process of adjustment. It is not enough to tell a worker that he is no longer needed on his present job and is to be placed on some other work, if we expect good morale and rapid readjustment.

Unfortunately the placement organization is usually quite limited in what it can do with regard to these factors. In many cases most of their work is a result of fluctuations in shop activity, so that they are continually dealing with difficult problems and anxious individuals in disturbing situations. Every time a department has considerable surplus of help the workers are apt to be worried about who will be transferred and to what jobs. Usually all a placement man can hope to do is to place the people on jobs where they have no loss in earnings. He usually feels, too, that as long as there is no loss in earnings, an individual should willingly accept the change and should have no great problem of readjustment. Generally he finds, however, that he has to "sell" the new job to the worker, that he has to try to convince him that the new job is just as desirable as the old because he will earn the same amount. Since he is really dealing with anxieties about the change, with feelings of insecurity and loss of status, the placement man frequently finds that his arguments, his perfectly logical explanations, fall on deaf ears. As a result he is apt to either feel that the workers are a stupid and illogical lot or else be disturbed by his own helplessness in the situation. And if he identifies with the workers' sentiments, he really

"takes a beating" in times of severe lay-offs, when he must be continually making decisions which either lay people off or place them on poorer jobs.

The ordinary placement organization can do little to facilitate the adjustment of workers to new jobs. Since they are an outside staff organization, they do not form a part of the normal daily work situation to which adjustment must be made; and no matter how well they explain the new job and try to prepare the worker, he must still make his own adjustment. Hence about all the placement people can do for the individual is to try to alleviate some of his anxieties and permit him to express his feelings about the change. They can then follow him up to see how the new job is working out and give him a chance to talk about his difficulties.

The Role of the Work Group

The work group plays an important part in the adjustment of the individual to a new work situation, as already pointed out. On his first day the transferred worker usually feels strange and lonely. He is not sure what is expected of him, and he does not know the other workers and how they feel about him. If the group is friendly and takes him in, if the boss is reassuring and stops by occasionally to see how he is getting along, if the workers ask him to eat lunch with them, then he will feel that he is wanted and that it will be a good group to work with. When he gets this sort of start he usually makes a rapid adjustment to the group itself and that in turn makes it easier for him to learn the job. In many cases the friendly group which takes the newcomer in and makes him feel at home makes much easier his adjustment to even a serious loss of status. On the other hand, he may find himself in a group which is indifferent or even opposed to newcomers, which has nothing to say to him or criticizes him and makes derogatory remarks, and perhaps with a foreman who ignores him. In such a case he ends up his first day feeling that everything about the job, the work group, and the boss is unpleasant.

This increases his feelings of anxiety over his change, makes it harder for him to learn the new work, and sometimes causes him to quit.

In all major changes which affect the individual the group plays an important part in his adjustment. Such changes are major crises to the individual in which he feels that he is faced with unbearable problems and decisions. If he is a member of a well-knit group which can understand his problems and express interest in him and appreciation of the way he feels, this helps to sustain him in his trials. This is similar to what happens in a small town or a well-integrated neighborhood when someone is sick or in trouble. The friends and neighbors rally around to express sympathy and offer help, and this serves a real need in helping the individual to face his troubles. But the individual who is not part of a well-integrated group, who has no one to rally around when he needs aid, is forced to face his problems alone, and he seems to have much more difficulty in meeting situations and adapting to changes.

Even under the most stable conditions the daily routines of the work, the constant interaction with other people, the minor changes in the situation and small difficulties which arise, all may be sources of disturbance to some individuals. Apparently the need for constant interaction and co-ordination of effort with other people gives rise to irritations which can lead to friction and conflict. When an individual has been working in a stable situation for a long time, he gradually adjusts to these daily conditions and accepts the minor difficulties without much reaction. When he is new to the situation, and especially if he feels the group is unfriendly, his reaction is stronger and may cause him to do or say things which irritate the others. In the same way, if he has status anxieties, is worried over family situations, feels frustrated in his desire to advance, or has other disturbances, he is likely to react more to the work difficulties or the actions of other workers.

The irritability of one individual may affect the entire group. If one worker is upset and begins to fuss at the others

and complain about the way they do things, the whole group may respond in kind. This in turn generates more friction and the tension may build up until there is serious conflict. This condition may be looked on as a form of unstable equilibrium in the group; and when it exists, small things may start a series of reactions which will disrupt the entire group. In other cases we see groups which do not react so seriously when one member is irritable; they say, "Joe has a grouch today," and let it go at that, perhaps avoiding him temporarily. Such groups may be said to have a stable equilibrium in which the minor individual disturbances do not upset the relationships of the group.

The conditions necessary for the development of this stable equilibrium in a group are not very well understood. In fact, it is sometimes hard to see just what does make the difference between a stable and unstable group, for they often occur side by side in a plant under what, on the surface at least, appear to be uniform working conditions. It does seem clear, however, that in many cases excessive pressure from the foreman has a disrupting effect on the group which stimulates internal friction. Constant criticism from the foreman, praising one at the expense of the others, hanging over them while they work, watching every detail and demanding that everything be done his way, all these things seem to irritate the group, and they are likely to vent their irritation on each other.

To the individual the difference in groups is important. If he is in a stable group, he finds a friendlier atmosphere, of course; his daily contacts are pleasant; he receives welcome co-operation when he needs it; and in times of personal disturbance he receives sympathy and help. In unstable groups there is a general feeling of tension and apprehension and frequent friction over the work and minor difficulties; they may be split into antagonistic cliques, and friendships are of short duration. Because of these differences many workers refuse a transfer out of a stable group or demand a transfer

from an unstable one, and this all adds to the problems of the placement man.

PROBLEMS OF PERSONAL CRISES

Response of the Group

Every individual at times must face serious personal crises, such as sickness, injury, unemployment, death or illness in the family. Most of these are universal problems which appear among all kinds of people all over the world, but the consequences for the individual vary with the response of his group. In a well-integrated primitive group, for example, the serious illness of one individual becomes a crisis for the entire group. They rally around him, they may crowd into his hut and participate in the treatment given by the local medicine man or witch doctor; and they may have magic songs or dances to drive out the evil spirits. Thus the group comes together to assert their solidarity against the powers of evil which are threatening their member. In case of death the group again gathers round; they join in the mourning and in all the ceremonies attending death. Primitive groups, furthermore, have established methods for looking after their members, so that illness or death of a husband does not mean poverty for his family.

Compared to this a modern industrial city is very poorly integrated. To begin with, it is not just one group but a conglomerate of innumerable groups of all kinds. An individual city-dweller does not automatically belong to any group, and is often relatively isolated. Among the groups, furthermore, the degree of integration varies tremendously. Some groups have many characteristics of a primitive group and rally around their members in times of crisis; others are poorly integrated and seem indifferent to their members. At the same time because of workers' dependence upon their earnings, and because of the heavy expenses incurred in illness or death, these crises are a severe threat to the whole way of life of the worker and

his family. As a result the informal organization of the group is not able to sustain the individual in these crises as the primitive group does.

In spite of their limitations, however, some factory groups do react to individual crises in much the same fashion as a primitive group. If a member is ill, they call on him, send him flowers or gifts, and even take up a collection to help with his expenses. In case of the death of a fellow-worker or member of his family, they send flowers and attend the funeral. Sometimes they give financial aid to the family, but this is rather limited at best. Gathering around and expressing sympathy and the ceremony of sending flowers are felt to be very important; it is the proper thing to do, and anyone who fails is thought to have failed in his duty. This is true of supervisors, too, and many foremen make a special point of attending funerals and calling on workers who are ill for any length of time.

The degree of stability and integration of the work group is reflected in their response during such crises. The very friendly groups, and especially those which have been together for years, are, of course, more concerned over the death or illness of members and more sympathetic with them in any crisis than the newly formed groups or those in which there is considerable friction. This does not mean that these latter groups actually ignore these crises, but only that they do not feel them as deeply. It means that the individual does not receive the same sort of support as he receives in more stable groups.

Employee Benefits

Most personnel organizations in considering these crises direct their attention first to the financial problems; and certainly this is the aspect in which the individual receives the least support from his group. The interest of personnel people and management in these problems has given rise to a large number of benefit plans which provide sick benefits, insurance, pensions, termination allowances in case of lay-offs, employee loan

funds, and so on, in various combinations. In some cases these are a gift from the company and in others the employees contribute a share of the costs. In any case the expense is justified on the grounds that such benefits will improve employee morale, will attract a better class of employees, and will create favorable attitudes toward management. Actually in many cases, management has no way of knowing that such benefits do produce these results but carries them on as an act of faith. Such benefits really do serve an important function to the individual, however, and they may indicate to him a sympathetic interest on the part of the management.

The reaction of employees to such benefits often seems to be determined by the way they are administered. If they are considered as a gift for which the employee should be eternally grateful, or if they are hedged around with red tape and annoying rules and regulations, then the employee cannot be expected to feel that management is really concerned about him. Apparently to be well received by the employees the plan should provide the sympathetic consideration of which he feels the need in times of crisis. In one well-run employee benefit plan, for example, the benefits were quite liberal, and the benefit department had at its disposal, besides, special funds for meeting unusual situations which required more aid than was provided by the regular plan. In case of the death of an employee, a representative of the department called on the family at once, offered their services in making funeral arrangements and handling other details, and if necessary advanced the family money to take care of current needs. This was done not in any spirit of paternalism or condescension, not with a feeling of looking after the poor, but rather with the attitude of a good neighbor standing by in a crisis.

CHAPTER X

PERSONNEL COUNSELING

GENERAL PLAN AND PURPOSE

Most of the adjustments which an individual must face involve an emotional adjustment as well as a change in behavior. The ease with which he adjusts to a lower status, or learns a new job, or accepts the daily routine of his work, all depend to a large extent upon his attitudes and his emotional state. If he is filled with anxieties or with feelings of frustration, if he develops morbid preoccupations over the change, then his adjustment is painful, difficult, and slow. If the situation is satisfying, if the change is felt to bring status and opportunities, if he looks forward to it, then the adjustment is rapid and easy. Thus one of the big problems is that of aiding the emotional adjustment and relieving anxieties so that the proper adjustment of other behavior can take place.

The significance of this emotional disturbance is well recognized. Everyone in personnel work is continually impressed with the importance of feelings of anxiety or insecurity in the acceptance or adjustment to any change. Foremen have all witnessed instances of excessive anxieties growing out of some seemingly insignificant event. The trouble is that, although they recognize these things, they still do not know what to do about them. They have no effective tools for dealing with such problems. This gives rise to feelings of irritation with the people who present such problems and a wish that they would keep their feelings to themselves and not worry others with them. One common result of this is the tendency to avoid the person who is disturbed, to treat the anxiety as if it did not exist in the hope that it will eventually disappear of its own accord. Unfortunately such treatment by avoidance often makes the upset worker feel that his boss or the personnel people either are unsympathetic or do not like him, and this in turn is apt to increase his disturbance.

Counselor's Duties

Within the last few years, and especially since the critical manpower shortage has focused management's attention upon problems of employee adjustment and morale, there has been a wide spread of what are called "personnel counselors" or "women's counselors." These counselors are concerned with all the individual worker's problems, his anxieties and preoccupations, and they attempt to help him solve his problems. The place of these counselors in the structure varies with different companies, but they are generally part of the personnel organization rather than the line. In order to maintain contacts, they must be convenient to the workers and so they are usually located in the shop or spend most of their time there. While their duties also vary considerably from plant to plant, most of them have some or all of the following types of functions:

1. To help workers with personal problems arising outside the work situation.
2. To help them adjust to the work situation, and to handle complaints and disturbances in the work situation.
3. To communicate matters of company policies and practices to the employees.
4. To communicate the attitudes of employees to management.

The usual approach to the first two kinds of problems is one of direct action in the form of advice or assistance. If an employee is having difficulty with his family relations, for example, the counselor may give him advice, point out his mistakes, try to reassure him, or suggest that he get in touch with some social agency which handles problems of family adjustment. In case of health problems, a counselor may recommend a specialist, get in touch with the company doctor, arrange for hospital care, and so on. In case of friction in the work situation the counselor may give advice, talk to the foreman or the other workers, call them together to discuss the difficulty, explain to the employee that he is wrong in his attitude, or re-

assure him about his relations with others. With a new employee he may explain the company policies and rules, answer his questions, introduce him to the group, or otherwise help him to feel at ease. Sometimes counselors are expected to explain the company's rules and policies to all the workers, to answer questions for them all, and to see generally that the people have the right understanding of management and its efforts. At the same time they are expected to keep management informed concerning the attitudes and morale of the workers, to keep an eye on the administration of the various personnel policies, to make suggestions for improvements, and generally to provide an additional channel for communication to management of matters concerning human relations in the work situation.

Many of these duties are in effect a fairly direct service to employees and some companies have, in fact, set up counseling on that basis. Some counseling organizations help new workers with housing problems, arrange transportation, help with rationing problems, arrange for loans, plan recreation, provide for the care of children, and generally aid with the many problems arising under present wartime conditions. Though many companies have always provided a variety of employee services, there seems to be a greater need of them at present. One company explained their elaboration of such services on the grounds that to have employees work efficiently six and seven days a week they must be relieved of as many outside problems as possible.

While the simple direct employee services play a useful role, they rarely get at the basic problems involved in the adjustment of the individual. It is one thing to help a new employee to find living quarters convenient to the plant, but quite another sort of problem to help him with the difficulties which arise because he has to live with his wife's family, and still another problem to deal with complaints of discrimination by the foreman. Yet it is just these last types of problems which are so crucial in the adjustment of the individual.

Tools and Techniques

In examining the way many of these counselors operate and the way they think about their jobs, we see that they generally think in terms of direct action, of "doing something" for or about the people and their problems, of making decisions for the employees and then seeing that the decisions are carried out. Thus they may be labeled as "fixer-uppers" who busily go about fixing up everyone else's affairs, who are never at a loss for a word of advice or cheerful encouragement. They are always making decisions as to how the disturbed employee should act, how he should feel, or how he should think, and then doing everything possible to get him to act, feel, or think in that way. We see them deciding whether the disgruntled worker has been unfairly treated; and if they feel that he has, then they tell him so and spring to his defense; but if not, they must show him where he is wrong in feeling that way, they must convince him by arguments and explanations, or change his mind by clever suggestion. And we see them constantly dealing with the superficial aspects, the symptoms, of the underlying problems, since it is always easier to do something about the manifest symptoms than it is to diagnose and act on the basic difficulties out of which they arise. Thus it is always simpler to help the dissatisfied worker to transfer to another job than it is to get at the underlying causes of his dissatisfaction.

When we consider the problems with which these counselors are dealing, it would seem that they have a very important function in the organization. The real question, however, is not whether the problems are important but whether the techniques they use are effective in dealing with the problems. For that reason it might be well to consider the techniques, the problems involved in their use, and their general effectiveness.

Ordinarily personnel people, especially those in the counseling role, give little thought to the problems involved in the use of their most common tool, advice. If a worker has a home problem, they advise; if a foreman has trouble with his people,

they advise; if a policy is wrong, they advise; whatever the problem, they pour out advice. In fact, most of them take it for granted that advice is an effective tool, that it will aid the individual in solving his problems and assist him in his adjustment. Yet if we are really to judge such a tool, we must answer two questions: first, is the advice any good, does it point to the proper action which should be taken; and second, can the individual make use of it?

In one type of question which may be brought to the counselor, the correct answer requires only a simple type of knowledge and the answers can be readily given and readily used. These usually deal with external situations or objects and require information more than anything else. For example, if the employee wants to know where to buy safety shoes or how to obtain the ration coupon to get them with, it is quite simple to give him the information. Or if he wants financial or legal advice, he can be referred to the proper experts. In such cases the counselor merely has to have the knowledge himself or know where to obtain the information; in other words he becomes a sort of information bureau. Actually these questions do not present any real problem to the average employee, for if the counselor cannot give him the advice or information, someone else can. The really important problems, however, are the ones in which he is seeking help on matters which are of emotional importance to him. He is trying to decide whether he should get a divorce; he feels that his boss is unfair and wants to know what to do about it; he has been offered another job and cannot decide about it; or he thinks the company is not giving proper attention to the old-timers. In such problems the counselor faces the difficulty of understanding the underlying problem in all its complexities and knowing the individual so thoroughly that he can decide what is the proper advice for that person. Actually most counselors rarely have the detailed and intimate knowledge necessary for such decisions, and they either make superficial judgments or else accept the decisions of the individuals. If a person wants a divorce, they

may either accept that and tell him how to go about it, or they may listen to his story and on the basis of very inadequate facts decide that he is justified, or else they may try to show him that he is wrong in wanting a divorce. When we see the limited facts that the counselors have at their disposal and the extent to which they make decisions based on their own emotional reaction to situations, it becomes evident that a large portion of the advice showered upon the workers is inadequate or just no good.

In view of the deficiencies of the advice it is probably fortunate that most of it is never taken. Time and again personnel people are confronted with the sad realization that for all their good intentions workers rarely take their advice. No matter how often they tell workers to "cheer up" or not "be so sensitive," they rarely change their attitudes and go on being just as depressed and sensitive as ever. And if they tell a worker to talk it over with his boss, he is still reluctant to do so. In fact, examination of a great deal of evidence suggests that the only time direct advice is effective is when it is in accord with a decision which the individual has already been considering and about which he needs only a little reassurance to enable him to carry it out. Certainly it is a matter of serious doubt whether the extensive use of advice as a tool for aiding the individual actually makes any serious change in his attitudes or behavior.

Going hand in hand with advice we see attempts at reassurance. The counselor tries to strike a cheery note and find some argument to show that "everything is going to be all right." Yet they continually find that the individual does not feel reassured, although he may agree with the counselor at the moment for politeness' sake. We also find the counselor struggling to reassure the worker concerning the good will and intentions of the foreman or management, and in spite of his efforts the reassurance has only a momentary effect at best. In many cases his efforts are interpreted by the workers as a defense of management; they place the counselor on the side of management

and therefore not to be trusted. It has been found, too, that constant reassurance from the counselor tends to prevent the worker from talking freely about the way he feels or from expressing his own doubts. With either of the two reactions the effect is to shut the worker up so that the counselor can never get a clear picture of his feelings.

While much of this counseling work is quite new in the industrial field, work with similar problems has been going on for years in the fields of social work, child guidance, student counseling, and psychiatry. From this work considerable knowledge has developed concerning the problems and the methods available for dealing with them. With regard to the value of such techniques as advising and reassuring, one authority says:

A third approach has been the use of suggestion, in the sense of reassurance and encouragement. To this approach belong such procedures as that of Coué and his notions of autosuggestion. Here also should be included the many techniques of reassurance used by counselors and clinicians the world over. The client is told in a variety of ways, "You're getting better," "You're doing well," "You're improving," all in the hope that it will strengthen his motivation in these directions. Shaffer has well pointed out that such suggestion is essentially repressive. It denies the problem which exists, and it denies the feeling which the individual has about the problem. It is not unusual for the clinician or counselor to make so many statements of approval and reassurance that the subject does not feel free to bring his less acceptable impulses to the clinical situation. While this approach is still used by many counselors, there is no doubt that faith in it has steadily declined.¹

The same authority goes on to say further about the use of advice:

One commonly used type of psychotherapy is advice and persuasion. Possibly it might be called intervention. In this type of approach the counselor selects the goal to be achieved and intervenes in the client's life to make sure that he moves in that direction. We find extreme examples of it in certain radio "experts" who, after listening to a complex human problem for three or four minutes, advise the indi-

¹Carl R. Rogers, *Counseling and Psychotherapy* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), p. 21.

vidual as to exactly what he should do. While every trained counselor is well aware of the viciousness of such an approach, it is nevertheless surprising how frequently this technique is used in actual practice. Often the counselor is unaware of how much advice he gives or the extent to which he does intervene in the life of the client. In any complete record of counseling such phrases as "If I were you . . .," "I would suggest," "I think that you should . . .," occur very frequently.²

In view of the limited effectiveness of these two techniques, it is interesting to consider why personnel counselors in industry continue to lean so heavily upon them. It might seem that when they were tried and found wanting, the counselors would discard them for something more effective. At least, we ordinarily assume that that is what happens, on the theory that man learns from his mistakes. Actually there seem to be several difficulties which prevent the ready discard of these tools, one of the most important of which is that more effective tools are few and hard to come by. They are not acquired through reading a book nor do they often develop through trial and error; they must be learned through long and patient work under proper direction.

Advising and reassuring, furthermore, provide something very simple and tangible for the counselor to take hold of. Some one asks what to do and you tell him; he is depressed and you reassure him—all very simple and straightforward. At the same time once you have offered the advice or reassurance you have done your duty; he now knows what to do and should feel encouraged, and the rest is up to him. If he does not follow the advice, or if he does not feel cheered up, the fault is his and not yours. Besides this, the role of advice-giver is quite a superior role. It sets the counselor above the weak mortals who come to him for answers; it is a great builder-upper for his sense of importance. Thus it provides a very comfortable position for the counselor.

From the point of view of management this presents a serious situation. If the counselor is expected to aid the worker

²*Op. cit.*, p. 22.

in his emotional adjustment, if he is to relieve anxieties and disturbances in the work situation, it is not enough for him to follow methods which do not work. And if he does not learn by his mistakes but continues to cling to his ineffective methods because they provide him with personal satisfaction, it might be expected that management would rapidly lose confidence in the counselor's ability to perform his function and even in the effectiveness of the whole plan of counseling.

Communicating Company Policies

The communication of company policies and practices to employees presents a different sort of problem. In the past many companies have relied upon the foremen to handle this sort of thing, with the idea that the foremen are closest to the workers and can easily answer their questions and make the necessary explanations. When the organization was fairly stable, with experienced supervisors and not too rapid turnover of personnel, this was quite satisfactory. But with new and rapidly expanding organizations and "green" foremen working under pressure, the system breaks down. In such situations management often expects the personnel organization to take the responsibility for such communication, to see that announcements of changes in rules or policies are posted on bulletin boards or distributed to the workers, or to answer questions directly. Under such conditions if the worker has any questions concerning the policy on leaves of absence, on sickness pay, on merit rating, or any such matter, he may expect the personnel organization, and especially the personnel counselors, to give him the answers. Sometimes when this is the case the supervisors do not even attempt to give the answers but send the workers directly to the counselors for information.

Usually it is not enough for the counselor to supply information but he is expected to justify the policies as well, to make the worker understand why they are and convince him that they are right and fair. If he attempts this, the counselor finds that he is continually defending management to the

workers; he is trying to convince them of the fairness of management and correctness of its judgment. As a result the workers feel that it is no use going to him with their complaints since he is really only concerned with defending management. It is very difficult for the counselor to explain and defend management and still retain the trust and confidence of the workers, and it becomes still more difficult when, as often happens, he does not himself agree with many of the rules and policies

Communicating Worker Attitudes

The communication to management of the attitudes and problems of workers is even more difficult than communication to the workers, yet management is often very insistent upon it. Management often feels the need of some system of communication which will keep it in touch with the attitudes of workers, and it would, in fact, like to have a system which would bring weekly or monthly reports showing the morale of workers just as they have reports on costs. Since the counselor is in constant contact with the workers and presumably has a relationship which enables him to know how they feel, he is picked to make such reports. Management also wants to know, via the counselors, just how their policies are being carried out and how the intermediate levels, especially the foremen, are functioning. Thus they expect the counselor to function as a special channel of communication for information concerning human relations at the work level and a channel which can operate independently of the shop supervisory structure.

If the workers look on the counselor as someone to whom they can turn with their complaints and problems, and especially if they think of him as being on their side even against the foreman, the counselor will hear a lot of complaints involving supervisors or other workers. Each worker may come to him with complaints of unfair treatment, of friction in the group, of favoritism on the part of foremen, of lack of consideration for their problems and feelings, and so on. He may

face a barrage of complaints many of which are directed against the foreman and place him in an unfavorable light. As a rule the counselor is sympathetic with these attitudes on the part of the workers and he in turn is critical of the foremen. Then when he reports back to management he is apt to report the mistakes of the foremen, the things they do to upset the workers, and their inadequacies in handling human problems. This, of course, puts the foremen "on the spot" and creates anxieties on their part concerning the activities of the counselor. They may then develop defense tactics, take care in what they say to the counselor, try to discourage the workers from talking with him, and in talking to their superiors accuse the counselor of stirring up trouble, of encouraging the workers to complain, and of weakening the authority of the supervisors.

The counselor sees not only how the workers react to the supervisors but also their reaction to the company policies or practices determined by top management. If they see adverse reactions, they are prone to be sympathetic with the workers' criticisms. They often feel that management does not take the workers' point of view into account, that it has a blind spot with regard to the things that matter to people. As a result they often attempt to communicate these criticisms to management and to suggest changes. If management does not respond to their suggestions, they feel frustrated and tend to be more critical of management. Such critical attitudes are not well received by management, of course, and the counselor in turn is likely to be rebuffed.

In attempting to communicate these human problems to management the counselor is apt to fall into the same difficulties as the other specialists who emphasize their own point of view to the exclusion of others. Furthermore, their relation to the workers is usually such that they get the full impact of all disturbances and to some extent reflect the worker complaints. If, for example, a woman worker wants a leave of absence to visit her husband who is in a military training camp,

the counselor thinks of the request in terms of what it means to the woman, while the foreman or management think of all the job complications of letting the woman off or of the effect on the group if one is given a leave and the others refused. Or else the counselor may see the effects of a foreman's decisions without seeing all the factors which force him to make these decisions, or the pressures which force him to act hastily and without enough forethought. As a result the foreman frequently feels that the counselor sees only one side of the picture and fails to consider supervisory problems which the foreman must solve.

It is apparent that the personnel counselor is in a very difficult position. He is expected to be effective in aiding the adjustment of the workers, yet the tools with which he works are inadequate. He is expected to explain and justify the actions of management to the workers, yet he often feels that management does not understand the workers. He tries to communicate the problems of workers to management and meets with suspicion on the part of supervisors. Decisions concerning policies and practices are made without him, and he feels that his knowledge is of no use. Thus he often feels blocked and frustrated and ineffective in dealing with either management, supervisors, or workers. At the same time, he has considerable anxiety concerning the way he is being judged by his superiors; he worries about what management expects of him, and about how he can make a showing.

COUNSELING AT THE WESTERN ELECTRIC COMPANY

The Scope of the Work

Of all the work done in personnel counseling, that developed at the Hawthorne Plant of the Western Electric Company is by far the best known. Its whole history has been reported in great detail by those most active in its development and need not be described here.³ This program and its techniques were

³Roethlisberger and Dickson, *Management and the Worker*

developed as a result of research into problems of employee attitudes and work behavior in which the Western Electric Company and the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration collaborated. This personnel counseling program has been operating since 1936 and has gradually been extended to other plants of the Western Electric Company.

The whole industrial relations program of the company is well developed with a high degree of specialization. At the same time they have a wide variety of employee services and benefits; they provide for innumerable employee recreational and educational activities, and generally attempt to cover all aspects of employee relations. Thus their personnel counseling is one element in an extremely well-developed industrial relations program and is not thought of as a substitute for proper selection, training, placement or wage policies.

As a result of extensive research they found that, in spite of the development of the customary tools of good personnel administration, there was still need for some methods whereby the individual could be assisted with the problems arising out of his relations with others and could be aided in either adjusting to his social environment or in taking effective action to modify it. This is, in effect, what many other counselors and personnel people are attempting to do through the use of advice and encouragement. Fortunately, however, this was seen as a very complicated problem involving the emotional adjustment of the individual and one which would not readily succumb to such direct approach. Instead they developed as their major tool an interviewing technique which they found to be very effective in aiding the emotional adjustment of the individual and in helping him to deal effectively with his problems.

As we have seen the individual brings with him to the work situation certain patterns of behavior, certain attitudes, hopes, and expectations. In adjusting to the work situation he must adjust to the needs of the job and the limitations it sets. In many cases the adjustment requires considerable modification

of his attitudes and expectations and often involves severe emotional disturbances. Even after this adjustment takes place, however, there are constant changes and stresses which may also give rise to disturbances. There may be changes in the individual's personal situation, in his relations with his family, friends, or neighbors. There may be stresses due to the ordinary pressures in the work situation. There may be changes in formal organization which affect the position of the individual, or technological changes which upset the work situation. Whatever the cause, all these things mean fresh adjustment on the part of the individual and more problems for him to solve.

While in many cases the adjustment required may be a relatively minor one amounting to little more than a change in attitude toward the situation, the experience at Western Electric Company has shown that during the process of adjustment the individual develops anxieties and preoccupations which lessen his work effectiveness, disturb his relations with others, and lower his morale. Furthermore, this seems to be true of all people regardless of job, status position, education, level of intelligence, or other factors, although undoubtedly some people react more strongly to those problems than others. This disturbed behavior is extremely annoying to others, especially the individual's superiors, since they feel that he should not be upset over what seem trifles to them. However, it is to these problems that the personnel counselor addresses himself, and he is not concerned over whether the individual *should* be disturbed, but is interested in helping him make the necessary adjustment.

The Interviewing Technique

In this work the counselor uses a technique in which the individual is allowed and encouraged to talk freely about those things which worry him. The counselor does not have a set of questions to which he wants answers; he does not try to get the individual to see things in a different light; he does not try to persuade or to encourage him. The counselor uses his skill to get

the person to talk as freely as possible about the things which matter to him, and the counselor is intent on understanding what he has to say and the way he feels and thinks. Experience has shown that if the individual can talk freely about his problems and disturbances, and especially if he can get below the surface aspects to the underlying factors, he becomes less disturbed and can act more effectively.

In order to enable the individual to talk so freely about things which may be very personal, or about which he feels some embarrassment in telling another person, or about feelings which are often considered "wrong," it is necessary for the counselor to conduct the interview very carefully. Unless properly handled, it may make the individual feel uncomfortable, or make him think that he is expected to give certain information or tell certain things to the counselor; and in such cases the interview is not usually very effective. The counselors must, therefore, be thoroughly trained in the interviewing technique before they can function properly. To aid this training the organization has developed the following set of rules for interviewing:⁴

1. The interviewer should listen to the speaker in a patient and friendly, but intelligently critical, manner. This means that he is listening to what the other has to say with complete interest and attention. He is not listening with half an ear, with his thoughts on something else; he is intensely interested in every word and will not interrupt or cut the interview short. An "intelligently critical" manner does not mean that the interviewer is trying to see what is wrong but only that he wants the other to make things perfectly clear so that he is sure that he (the interviewer) understands what he is saying.
2. The interviewer should not display any kind of authority.

⁴A more detailed discussion of the interviewing method may be found in Roethlisberger and Dickson, *op. cit.*, Chapter XIII, "The Interviewing Method."

Another discussion of the use of the interviewing method in dealing with problems of individual adjustment may be found in Rogers, *op. cit.*

It is significant that Rogers in his work in clinical psychology and Roethlisberger and Dickson in their work in industry independently developed identical interviewing techniques

He should not be in a position of authority so that he is making decisions about the speaker; he must not have to do things to him, for him, or about him. If he has authority and must make decisions, then the individual talking to him will feel that he must say the right things and make the right impression, which will inhibit his talking freely and without anxiety.

3. The interviewer should not give advice or moral admonition. He should not attempt to advise or direct the other or make decisions for him. Neither should he pass judgment on him. He should not point out what is right or wrong; he should never be shocked or critical because such attitudes prevent the individual from talking freely.

4. The interviewer should not argue with the speaker. Any argument is in some way an attempt to direct his actions or his thinking or implies that he is wrong; and almost invariably it interferes with an effective interview. Furthermore, it often forces the individual to defend himself rather than to examine his attitudes and behavior. If allowed to talk things out he may often change, but argument seems only to reinforce the emotional attitudes and prevent change.

5. The interviewer should talk or ask questions only under certain conditions. He is there to listen to the other person and not to express his own ideas, and everything he says or does should be to the end of making it possible for the other to talk freely. He may have to start the interview with a little social conversation to put the interviewee at ease. He may want to ask a few questions about the interviewee's job, or his family, or some other comfortable topic. He may have to explain his function as an interviewer, reassure about the confidential nature of the interview, explain that he has no authority, or do whatever is necessary to relieve the interviewee of anxiety concerning the interview. He may want to express his interest in what is being said or his appreciation of the other's efforts in trying to make his meaning clear. He may need to ask questions to clarify some statement which he fails to understand. But

whatever he says, it should be directed toward helping the other to talk more freely.

One of the important conditions of this type of personnel counseling is that the interviews be strictly confidential. The interviewee must be sure that the things he says will not be used against him in any way, that they will not be carried to his foreman nor to anyone else who will act upon them. Unless he is sure of this he will always have his doubts about talking; there will be things which he dare not talk about, criticisms he dare not express. And if the counselor does fail to keep things confidential, sooner or later the workers begin to think of him as a "stool pigeon," a spy, and from then on they talk only in a superficial manner.

To the worker the counselor stands in a unique relation. He is the one person to whom the worker can turn who is wholeheartedly interested in him and what he has to say, who is always friendly and sympathetic and never critical, who never tries to judge or direct but only tries to understand the way he feels. The counselor is the one person to whom it is safe to talk, to whom you can criticize your boss or your wife without worrying about it getting back to them, to whom you can express your secret fears and weaknesses.

Effects of Interviewing

When we examine the effects of this upon the individual, we see several results of such interviewing. The first, and in many ways the most striking, effect is what is technically referred to as emotional release or catharsis, or, in the language of the shop, "blowing off steam" or "getting it off your chest." Often at the beginning of the interview a person may be emotionally disturbed, angry, in tears, extremely tense, or so upset that he can hardly talk coherently. He may dwell continually on some immediate disturbance, repeating over and over some story of mistreatment, or worrying about his relations with his superior or his family. As the interview proceeds the nervous tension usually begins to disappear; he becomes more relaxed

in posture and gestures, his speech becomes more coherent and less explosive, and his statements more rational and less emotional; until by the end of the interview he appears quite calm again. Such a change does not mean that the problem is solved or that adjustment has taken place, but it does indicate that the emotional tension has been relieved.

Another effect is that it helps to clarify the individual's thinking. When under severe emotional stress, the individual usually has difficulty in thinking through his problems; he jumps to conclusions, makes irrational interpretations, and rushes into actions which prove ineffective or even harmful. Thus under the stress of the emotional disturbance he may interpret every act of his superior as indicating dislike or criticism and may magnify minor incidents until they seem to him to be major calamities. Or he may rush into drastic actions, such as going over his boss's head to accuse him of being unfair or prejudiced, demanding a transfer, even quitting, actions which do not really solve his problems and may even make them worse. If through the interview the emotional stress is even temporarily relieved, the individual is able to see his problem more clearly and to think about it more rationally. Thus as the interview progresses the individual begins to re-examine his problem; the molehills of minor incidents no longer appear to be insurmountable mountains; he sees new angles and makes new interpretations. In some cases he may immediately make decisions as to what to do, or he may decide that no immediate action is necessary and that he should think things over some more, get further information, or await other developments. Sometimes his decision is not difficult to arrive at; it may even have been one which he has considered before but which he is able to accept and act on only after his emotional stress has been relieved.

This "problem-solving" effect may occur during the interview or it may take place later. Often the interview seems to start the individual thinking through his problem; and though he may not arrive at any conclusion at the moment, he con-

tinues to consider it more clearly until finally he comes to some conclusion. In such cases the individual may tell the interviewer the next day that after thinking over the problem he has decided what to do. In many cases this problem-solving effect operates even where there is no particular emotional disturbance. In these cases, too, the free discussion of the problem helps to clarify the individual's thinking and leads to more effective decisions. Part of this effect seems to be due to the effort to make the problem clear, to explain it to another person, since by the time he has made it clear to someone else he sees it more clearly himself. This is often recognized by both workers and supervisors who will seek out the counselor to present some problem on which they are working, even though the counselor does not make suggestions or try to direct their thinking.

In many cases it is surprising to note the speed with which the behavior of an individual is altered. Foremen often say to the counselor, "What do you do to them in these interviews? Why, Jack has been a changed man since you had him out this morning." In many cases a person who, before the interview, has been noticeably worried or depressed, or a girl who had been crying and unable to work, is relieved and cheerful afterward and returns to the job with renewed vigor. Sometimes it is observed that output actually increases after an interview. In general, such obvious results are seen in those cases where the emotional tension is great and the change follows the relief from this tension. In some cases the operators themselves have commented that their efficiency decreases when under an emotional strain and improves again after an interview.

Another type of result is what may be called the readjustment or reorientation of the individual. This involves more than the momentary emotional relief or the solving of some immediate problem. It involves a general readjustment of the individual when he has been incapable of either achieving his own satisfactions or of adapting to the demands made upon him. Thus the individual who has reached his ceiling but

who is still seeking higher status and more recognition may be in such an agony of frustration that he is ineffective in his work or in his relations with others. In some cases the only possible solution may be an acceptance of his own limitations and the limitations of the job, and an adjustment of all his hopes and expectations. In other cases the individual may be escaping from the realities of his situation by excessive drinking or by withdrawing from contacts with others. The readjustment of these individuals is at best a slow and difficult process. In some instances they are people who have been chronic problems for years, often growing progressively worse until their behavior can no longer be tolerated. To achieve adequate readjustment, such that they can continue as acceptable and normal workers, may require months or even years. Generally, however, a few weeks of repeated interviews will enable them to make a momentary improvement such that they can stay on the job. The heavy drinker will reduce his drinking temporarily, the anxiety cases will be somewhat relieved and able to put their minds on the job, insomnia disappears, and so on. This relief, even though temporary, allows time for the slow process of reorientation to begin.

Counselors and the Work Group

This discussion of the interviewing method might give the impression that the counselor is concerned only with the individual who is disturbed or maladjusted. Actually he is constantly working with the entire group and takes care that he does not limit himself to problem cases. In fact, he is assigned to a particular territory which may comprise certain organizations or certain shop locations, and his job is to develop friendly relationships with every individual in that territory, to have frequent contact with each, and to have formal off-the-job interviews whenever possible. In this way he is constantly around and available whenever any of the group want to talk with him, and at the same time he is building up the kind of relationships which will enable them to talk freely to him.

By giving attention to everyone, he is able to dispel the idea that only people in difficulties are interviewed, which in itself would prevent many people from going to him. Under these conditions it is found that even the best-adjusted people face problems from time to time which are disturbing, or get involved in frictions within the group, and they benefit from the opportunity to have someone with whom they can talk.

When there is friction and disturbance within the work group, counseling can often ease the situation. In the first place, interviews with an individual tend to affect his relationships with others in the group. An improvement in the emotional equilibrium of the individual generally improves his relations with those around him and thus affects the entire situation. At the same time the counselor is working with all the members of the group, relieving the emotional tensions, giving all of them a chance to talk about their difficulties with the others, voice their annoyances, and generally "blow off steam." When they talk to the counselor of these things, the talk does not aggravate the situation as it may if they talk to one another, because the counselor does not repeat the talk nor become involved in the difficulties

Counselor and the Foreman

Another important result of counseling at the Western Electric Company has been to improve the relationships between workers and supervisors. When he is active in the group, the counselor stimulates the supervisor to consider the effects of his own actions upon the workers. At the same time the counselor keeps in touch with the foreman, encourages him to discuss his problems in dealing with the workers, and even interviews him. Also, in his interviews with the workers, he relieves emotional tension so that the workers are better able to present their own problems to the supervisor and make themselves clear if they have complaints. As a result the workers begin to feel that the foreman is actually

concerned about them as individuals, and the foreman in turn gains a better understanding of his workers.

In order to gain the most benefits from counseling, the supervisor must make use of the counselor personally. Counseling is not something just for the workers but should be used by everyone in the situation. Experience demonstrated that when a supervisor discusses his problems and expresses his own emotional attitudes, when he talks about the way he feels and the way his people feel, he not only gains better understanding of his own problems but he sharpens his perceptions about the way his workers feel. When the counselor is able to work closely with the foreman as well as the workers, there is invariably an improvement in the whole situation.

Satisfactory Counseling Conditions

It has been found that this type of counseling can be effective only under certain conditions. The use of the interviewing method, which is the basis of counseling, can be perfected only in certain organizational situations. In general it has been found that the best results can be obtained under the following conditions:

1. The counselor should be outside the organization (the line of authority) in which he is counseling. In the Western Electric Company the counselors are part of the industrial relations organization and thus independent of the groups with which they work. In this way they can maintain a neutral role in relation to everyone in their territories and can be protected from demands that they divulge confidential information.

2. The counselor should be free of all other duties and should give his entire time and attention to counseling. It has not been found satisfactory to have a counselor filling several roles, especially where other roles involve authoritarian relations to the workers. The interviewing technique requires all the interest and attention the counselor can give, and to maintain effective relations with all the people in even a small

territory requires a lot of time. For that reason his effectiveness as a counselor is seriously impaired if he has other duties and responsibilities.

3. He should have a supervisor in his own organization to whom he can talk freely about his own problems and who will protect him from pressures from above. To be effective the counselor himself must be reasonably free from anxieties about his work and his relations with his superiors. To give this reassurance his supervisor should understand the counseling process, be able to assist the counselor with his problems, and be able to interview him if necessary. At the same time the supervisor must keep information about the counselor's problems confidential, so that the latter will come to him freely and not have to guard himself against his superior's indiscretions.

By setting up their personnel counseling organization to meet these conditions, the Western Electric Company was able to avoid many of the difficulties which most other counseling organizations are facing today. To begin with, they knew what they were trying to do and the limitations of the tools with which they could work. Once they had decided to use the interviewing methods as a tool to aid the adjustment of the individual, they built an organization designed to make possible the full use of the tool. They set up a separate counseling organization as part of the industrial relations organization, with supervisors who were thoroughly trained in the interviewing methods and concepts, and whose only responsibility was to make the fullest use of these methods in aiding the shop organizations. The counselors were assigned to a shop territory in which they had full access to all individuals and in which they were permitted to move about freely, talking to the people on the job as well as off the job, so that they could build up counseling relationships and not have to wait for individuals to come to them. It is certain that if the counselors had been confined to private offices and had had to wait for the workers to be sent or to come voluntarily for

interviews, the whole program would have died within a short time.

Under these conditions they have been able to develop a staff of people who are highly skilled in this type of interviewing, and who are very effective in applying it to a wide variety of problems arising out of either individual disturbances and maladjustments or out of inter-personal frictions in the work situation. At the same time their lack of authority and freedom from other duties has kept them from any appearance of encroaching on the duties and responsibilities of others, either shop supervisors or the other personnel organizations. Thus they can maintain close relations with everyone in their territories, and they are neutrals who can be accepted and trusted by all of those involved in any situation. Over a period of time they have been able to demonstrate to the workers and to supervisors the value of their work, and they have obtained a sincere acceptance by the shop, not merely a toleration for them as something imposed by management.

Because of their clear understanding of their objectives and methods and the recognition of the difficulties which must be faced, this personnel counseling organization has established itself as a very important element in the personnel program of the company; and it is probably one of the few counseling programs which will be maintained intact during the period of post-war readjustment. It is one of the few which gives serious consideration to the technical problems of aiding the adjustment of the individual, and it is outstanding in its technical performance. The statement of its interviewing methods and the presentation of the entire conceptual scheme, as presented in *Management and the Worker*, is a major contribution to the entire field of counseling, in industry, in schools, and elsewhere.

APPLICATIONS OF THE INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUE

Although the interviewing technique has been applied at the Western Electric Company primarily as a tool for the per-

sonnel counselors, it has also proved to be of considerable value for other personnel people and for foremen and supervisors. There and elsewhere attempts have been made to train others in the basic concepts and techniques of these interviewing methods, and it has been found a very useful tool for anyone who deals with people. It is safe to say, in fact, that whenever a person tries consistently to apply this point of view in dealing with other people, he finds that his relationships improve and that he is able to act more effectively. For that reason all personnel people, whatever their duties, should try to understand the method and develop skill in its use; and they should not make the mistake of dismissing it because their particular role does not provide the most satisfactory conditions for its use.

Probably one of the most important ideas which most people obtain from training in this method is the realization that they must understand other people to be effective in dealing with them, and that they can get this understanding only by listening to what they have to say. Closely allied with this is the realization that arbitrary orders, logical arguments, or exhortations do not change a person's attitudes nor convince him that he is wrong. Unfortunately we see supervisors, engineers, personnel people, and others continually trying to win arguments, gain co-operation, or change attitudes through these devices. Once they stop trying to sell their ideas and point of view and try instead to understand the other person, they find that the attitudes of the other toward them changes and they obtain much better co-operation.

With the training comes, too, the realization that one has to get below the surface of complaints, antagonisms, lack of co-operation, and similar difficulties in order to know what to do about them. Those in positions of authority are accustomed to taking complaints at their face value and dealing with them at that level. If a subordinate complains that he needs more money, or that the work is too hard, or his machine is no good, his superior usually accepts that as an

accurate statement of what is thought to be wrong, and he either corrects the condition, tries to prove that his subordinate is mistaken, or decides there is nothing he can do about it. If the subordinate refuses to accept such actions, he is labeled as a "griper" who cannot be satisfied and must therefore be ignored. Once the supervisor realizes that there may be other things behind the manifest complaints, and that by interviewing he may get to the real root of the problem, then he is encouraged to try to deal with these difficulties instead of avoiding them. Not only do these efforts enable him to handle complaints more effectively, but his increased interest in trying to understand his subordinates improves his relations with them and reduces the frictions and disturbances growing out of the supervisor-subordinate relation.

CHAPTER XI

MINORITY GROUPS IN INDUSTRY

THE GENERAL PICTURE

An important element in the pattern of American industry is the continual process of introducing and assimilating new groups into the structure. For many years there was a constant flow of European immigrants into American industry as one nationality group after another followed the promise of the New World. As each group arrived it began to move into the industrial pattern as a new and strange minority seeking to make its way in an industrial structure dominated by the older groups. And in time each of these became an older group into which still newer groups were intruding.

In the industrial areas each of these newcomers followed a similar pattern. Each new group tended to move in at the bottom of the community structure. The latest comers always had the lowest status; they moved into the poorest districts; they were looked down upon by all the older groups and were considered the poorest, dirtiest, least intelligent, and least desirable group in the community. Each new group formed its own neighborhood, speaking its own language, and living its own culture, and generally formed a little island separated from the groups around it. The passage of time, however, gradually reduced this separation and its barriers. The children learned new ways and moved to new neighborhoods. And as each group began to adjust itself to the new life and move upward in the occupational structure, there were still newer groups pushing in beneath them, people again different in language and culture starting at the bottom of the heap. On these new groups in turn were directed all the criticisms which the others had faced.

In the last few years, since the flow of European immigrants has been largely halted, there has been a slow process of assimilation. Many of the sharp differences between groups

have disappeared, at least as far as industry is concerned, so that it is no longer necessary to pick foremen with an eye to their nationality background or their command of foreign languages, nor to consider the ethnic composition of a group when hiring new workers. At the same time, with the shutting off of European immigration, there is no longer the continual stream of new foreign groups to move in beneath the old, to take the heavy, dirty, unskilled jobs, and to be a new bottom layer whom everyone can scorn as ignorant, incompetent, "dumb laborers." These low-status, low-paid jobs must then be filled by members of the older groups or by their children and grandchildren. But the urge for improvement, the stimulus of better education and greater assimilation in the American life, with its traditions of getting ahead, has made these young people unwilling to accept these low-status jobs. Thus we see forces operating to reduce the supply of workers who will freely accept the lowest jobs, and at the same time we have an increasingly large portion of the old group who are acutely dissatisfied when restricted to this occupational level. From management we hear complaints that the younger generation is not what it ought to be or what its parents were. Formerly executives spoke disparagingly of the "dumb polaks" or "bohunks" who were good for nothing except the lowest sort of jobs and who were content to spend their lives in them. Today these same executives speak with nostalgia of these same workers and recount their virtues, their faithful plodding service, their willingness to accept whatever job was offered, their interest in a steady job and modest income. In contrast they point to the restlessness of the next generation, their unwillingness to take the hard and dirty jobs, their grasping for the symbols of mobility, and their spendthrift ways.

This occupational impasse has to some extent been averted, and at the same time been complicated, by recent migrations within this country. The need for workers, especially the critical shortage of labor during the war period, has stimulated an internal movement of people from rural areas to industrial

centers, much of which has been from the rural South. The movement of southern whites and Negroes has been so extensive that they may, in fact, be considered the latest immigrants into industrial areas. Simultaneously women have been moving into industry in increasingly large numbers and are now employed in many industries and occupations previously closed to them. Each of these new groups has faced problems similar to those of new nationality groups. Each has had to come in at the bottom of the industrial structure starting as common labor in unskilled jobs, and each has spread upward through the structure only slowly. Each has had to accept a subordinate role, each has been ridiculed and criticized by the superior groups and had its work scorned: "That is only woman's work," "That job is only fit for niggers." As they begin to press toward the better jobs and higher status, they find barriers raised against them, barriers of tradition, of beliefs concerning their incompetence, reluctance to accept them into other groups. And like the other groups when they were new, they are the ones who have the least security in the system and the ones who will fill the ranks of the unemployed during times of depression.

NEGROES: NEW INDUSTRIAL IMMIGRANTS

The movement of southern Negroes to northern and western industrial centers is similar to the migrations of Europeans in some respects. They are culturally and racially different and set apart; they come in at the bottom of the social and occupational structures; they are looked down upon and unwanted either as neighbors or fellow-workers; they are considered dirty, dangerous, untrustworthy, ignorant, stupid, and so on. Unlike the European immigrants, however, Negroes are not likely to become assimilated in a generation or two, for the white society maintains a strict caste system with effective controls for keeping Negroes separate and subordinate. Furthermore, the Negro is conspicuous. Whereas the European immigrant could gradually lose his identity and blend with

the general population, the Negro is branded by his skin color so that he cannot lose himself in the mass. This fact is one of the most important reasons why his adjustment in the industrial population is a slower and more difficult process than that of any other group.

The Caste System¹

The position of Negroes in our society and the generally accepted attitudes toward them produce serious problems in their introduction into a plant or work group. In the first place, there are very common, and very strong, beliefs in the uncleanness and disease of the Negro, which are a part of the whole caste system in which he is kept separate and subordinate. Accompanying these attitudes is the reluctance and even refusal on the part of white workers to share washrooms, locker rooms, and eating facilities with Negroes. In many cases open clashes and work stoppages have resulted from trying to bring Negroes into white locker or washrooms or into company restaurants. The whites always explain their attitude and resentment in terms of the uncleanness of Negroes and fear of disease. Actually these attitudes are expressions of the social processes by means of which Negroes are kept at a distance and "in their place." No matter how strong the feeling may be, there is never any objection to a Negro acting as janitor or washroom attendant or as cook or dishwasher in the restaurant. It is only when he sits down to eat beside a white, when he washes at the same basin in front of a white, when he undresses at an adjacent locker, it is only when he does these

¹Space does not permit a detailed description of this system here. The reader may find a comprehensive discussion of Negro-white relations, the American caste system, and its codes and controls in the following studies of southern communities:

a) Allison Davis, Burleigh B. Gardner and Mary R. Gardner, *Deep South—A Social Anthropological Study of Caste and Class* (University of Chicago Press, 1941).

b) John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (Yale University Press, 1937).

c) Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma* (Harper and Bros., 1944).

things as a fellow-worker and an equal that the whites begin to worry about being contaminated by contacts with him.

Segregation and Discrimination

While these attitudes toward Negroes may be considered irrational, they are so strong that management must take them into account in dealing with the problem. In the past the simplest procedure was to provide separate facilities for Negroes. This avoided the problem and also served to maintain the segregation of Negroes within the plant. In many cases they were even restricted to certain departments and worked in separate groups. They were also generally limited to the dirty, disagreeable, and low-status jobs, such as laborers, material handlers, janitors, and porters. In this way the problem was solved by perpetuating the caste system within the plant.

From the point of view of management this worked very well during the pre-war period, but more recently the problem has become more difficult to solve. In 1940 the federal government began to take steps to prevent discrimination in essential industries. This movement culminated in the Executive Order 8802 and the establishment of a Committee on Fair Employment Practices. This immediately led to actions to prevent any form of discrimination in defense industry because of "race, creed, color, or natural origin." At the same time, the growing labor shortage in industrial areas impressed management with the need to make the fullest possible use of all available workers and not to allow any prejudice against Negroes to prevent their use. Thus, not only was there pressure from the federal government to prevent segregation of Negroes or their restriction to the lowest types of jobs, but also the manpower shortage made it desirable to use them on any jobs for which they could be trained. At the same time, the attitudes toward Negroes still persisted among white workers, supervisors, and management, so that, regardless of the need to use Negroes, the problem of how to use them still remained.

In plants where Negroes were already established in the

low-status jobs and with separate facilities, there was the problem of breaking down this established pattern before Negroes could be mixed in with the whites and moved to better jobs. On the whole this has been more difficult than the problem of introducing them where they had never worked before. Where they are completely new to a plant, there was no need to change established customs but only to overcome the initial resistance and suspicion and fit the Negroes into the patterns customary for any new employee.

Introducing Negroes as Equals

In some cases management, having decided to hire Negroes and put them on the same jobs as whites, merely issued orders to this effect and expected to have Negroes moved in immediately in large numbers. On the whole such methods did not work very smoothly; open friction was frequent and the whites often refused to accept the Negroes. The sudden appearance of Negroes in the work groups, especially if they were brought in in considerable numbers, always aroused antagonism and fears as to what was happening to the job and whether Negroes would supplant the whites. The sudden movement of Negroes into positions of equality and close association was always interpreted as a threat to the superior status of the whites, and they reacted accordingly.

Many concerns, on the other hand, went about the change in a more cautious manner. The most generally successful procedure was one in which management first paved the way for the change by having discussions with various levels of supervision and sometimes with union officials. In such discussions management found it best to take a firm stand to the effect that they had no alternative but to employ Negroes and that they could not segregate nor discriminate against them. Management could then ask the subordinates what they thought the difficulties would be and how they could be worked out. The group was assured, at the same time, that only the "best type" of Negroes would be picked and that careful ex-

aminations would be given to be sure that they were free of disease. After these discussions the plants would hire a few carefully selected Negroes and spread them around through the shops, and in some cases a few were put in the personnel organization in clerical or stenographic jobs. Then, as the Negroes began to be taken as a matter of course, more could be brought in gradually without difficulty.

By having these discussions beforehand, the supervisors were prepared for the Negroes and given a feeling that they were being taken into the confidence of management and given a chance to express their ideas. At the same time, management was able to reassure them as to the purpose of the move and the reasons for it. Thus, before the Negroes actually appeared, the supervisors and even the workers were already becoming accustomed to the idea, and the actual appearance of Negroes on the job was not a sudden shock threatening their security. The careful selection of educated, "nice-looking" Negroes, who were quite different from the average concept of the Negro, created a favorable impression which was strengthened when the whites became acquainted and saw that the Negroes could do the work and were pleasant people to work with. This further broke down their ideas as to what Negroes were like, and white workers and supervisors began to see them as individuals to be judged as individuals and not merely as members of an inferior group.

The movement of Negroes into more skilled jobs has, of course, been hampered by their lack of training and experience. Since they had generally been kept in unskilled jobs which gave them no opportunity to learn to operate machines or to become familiar with more skilled work, they were not prepared to move up in the job hierarchy. This meant that, unless they were given special training, they would still be limited for the most part to the simpler jobs, and that few of them could be moved to the higher levels.

Negro Class Differences²

The Negro population as a whole has a much lower average level of education than the white population; their living conditions are poorer, their incomes are less, and their work experience more limited. As a group they have lived in severe poverty in slum areas without education or opportunity to better their conditions. Furthermore, those Negroes who have managed to maintain themselves above this level, who have received more education and training in spite of the general restrictions, have generally not been able to obtain the skilled or white-collar jobs in business and industry. As a result, when industry first started to hire Negroes, they were able to select men and women from the higher status group, who came from middle class homes with high-school and even college training. Many of these high-caliber Negroes were eager to break into industry at something above the janitor level and gladly took the ordinary shop jobs. Thus there were a group of high-status Negroes moving into shop jobs beside the lower-class white workers. The whites recognized this status difference and in general were favorably impressed, in many cases commenting on the intelligence and quality of the Negroes.

As the employment of Negroes spread, however, this group was rapidly exhausted and industry began to bring in lower class Negroes who more nearly fitted the picture of what Negroes were expected to be like. In this group there was the usual lower-class belligerence and aggression, a tendency to settle arguments by fighting, an inclination to carry knives as weapons, and so on. At the same time, these Negroes had, for the most part, never associated with whites in any position of equality. They had worked *under* whites, never with them. In schools they had been in all-Negro or predominantly Negro

²Further discussion of Negro class behavior may be found in the following studies:

a) Allison Davis and John Dollard, *Children of Bondage—The Personality Development of Negro Youth in the Urban South* (American Council on Education, Washington, D. C., 1940).

b) W. Lloyd Warner, Buford H. Junker, and Walter A. Adams, *Color and Human Nature* (American Council on Education, Washington, D. C., 1941).

schools and had little or no contact with whites either in the schoolroom or on the playgrounds. With this limited interracial experience they came into a working world which was largely white and they moved into positions of relative equality with whites. They had had little opportunity to learn, even among themselves, the patterns of co-operation and co-ordination necessary for comfortable and effective group work, and most of them were not accustomed to the steady, routine grind of factory work.

Such a situation is pretty obviously "dynamite." And it is no wonder that there have been many cases of friction between Negro and white workers under these conditions. As already pointed out, the many pressures of the daily work situation often give rise to irritation and friction between individual workers without the added complication of racial differences; and the irritation of the white workers seems to be increased by the Negroes' lack of training and general unfamiliarity with factory work. When white workers expressed their irritation, the Negroes often reacted in typical lower-class fashion, meeting aggression with aggression, profanity with profanity, and threats with threats. In such cases the whites almost invariably felt that this behavior justified all their beliefs about Negroes. The Negroes in turn united against the whites, and the resulting situation was ripe for serious racial conflict and even riot. Generally tension of this sort can be traced to irritations and difficulties which grow out of the work situation itself, and though they may be accentuated and exaggerated by the racial factor, they are not specifically due to having Negroes on the job. In other words, job pressures, crowded locker rooms, inexperienced workers, long hours, all give rise to irritations and open conflict, and as long as only white workers are involved there are no racial implications. But the moment the difficulty involves both whites and Negroes, the whites conclude that the Negroes are really vicious and dangerous, as they have suspected all along, and should be put back in their place; and the Negroes conclude that the whites do indeed have

it in for them and they must stand together against white aggression and domination.

Among the better-educated and higher-status Negroes, who were a valuable addition to the work groups and made an easy adjustment at first, certain problems of a different nature developed later. In the first place, they took the factory jobs with the idea that this was the first step toward an equality in industry both for themselves personally and for Negroes generally. In many cases they were individuals of considerable education, technical training, or general ability, and they expected that their ability would receive recognition. Like all college-trained men in the shops, they soon became impatient with the normal rate of progress, and their advancement to higher-status jobs was further slowed down by the fact that they were Negroes. This problem became acute when Negroes of lower status and less education were brought in at the same job level as these superior groups. After a period of time, when their excellent performance and high morale brought them no recognition or advancement, these exceptional Negroes became discouraged and restless, and they began to feel that there was no real opportunity for their race in industry free from discrimination. As this feeling developed their work deteriorated; and they began looking for other jobs, or turned to union activities for recognition and satisfaction and as a means of fighting against the color restrictions.

WOMEN WORKERS

During the war period, too, there has been a rapid and extensive increase in the employment of women. They have moved into plants which formerly had been completely closed to them and into almost all levels of skilled jobs. Special training programs have prepared them for jobs as welders, machinists, inspectors, and many other jobs which had been considered strictly men's work. In thousands of cases the jobs have been re-engineered to require less skill or strength so that women can do such work, and often the tools and equipment

have been especially designed to make the work more suitable for women. All this has meant not merely an increase in the number of women in industry, but, more important, their spread beyond the accepted categories of women's jobs, and the breaking down of many former beliefs concerning women's lack of mechanical ability and other limitations

This influx of women into industry is different from the introduction of Negroes or other groups, since it is not accompanied by a wave of migration. Women are not a strange new group but are drawn from the general population. The extensive employment of women in industry does not mean the introduction of a new element in the social organization but means a change in the role and activity of a group which is already part of the established system. The problem, then, is not one of assimilating a new group which is trying to make a place for itself; it is one of readjusting both industry and the society so that women can function in a new role. To some extent, of course, women have always worked in industry. Certainly at the working-class level of the society a large proportion of the women have worked as a matter of course and many have had to work to support dependents. Nevertheless, the present conditions have produced such a rapid increase in their numbers that the readjustment has been a considerable problem.

Although women are neither a new group in the society nor wholly new to industry, certain elements in their assimilation are similar to those of Negroes and other new groups. Like the Negroes, they have not as a group been trained for the higher-skilled jobs until recently, and they have not had opportunity to develop their mechanical knowledge and ability. In the past they have been relegated to jobs which had become established as woman's work, and no effort had been made to prepare them for other kinds of work. This is in contrast to the average man going into industry, who is expected to be able to move to higher jobs, who seeks out opportunity to learn these jobs, and who may be assisted in his advancement by

older workers or by a system of training or apprenticeship. Like the European immigrants, the women have been considered inferior workers, ignorant and incompetent; and like the Negroes, they have had little chance for advancement.

The Woman's Role

Woman's role in our society has an important effect upon her position in the industrial world. At all levels of the society the accepted function of a woman has been that of wife and mother, whose first interest is in the family and the home, and whose most important duties are those of caring for the home and rearing the children. In contrast to this, the accepted function of a man, as a successful father, is that of providing home and sustenance. Thus, while the successful wife and mother is expected to spend her life in the home, the successful husband generally spends his working outside in order to support the home and family. This difference is sharply illustrated in the different attitudes which young men and young women express toward their jobs. As pointed out earlier (chapter VIII), the average girl taking her first full-time factory job looks upon it as a temporary thing to fill in the time before she gets married and settles down to rearing a family. She is not usually much concerned over advancement or future opportunities in the work, but is interested in whether it provides opportunity for meeting single men, whether it will interfere with her social life, whether it is a pleasant job with a friendly group. A young man, on the other hand, is constantly concerned with the opportunities of the job. How fast can he get ahead, and how long will it take him to reach a level of income where he can afford to marry? In other words, a girl is filling in time while she finds a husband and begins her *real* career, while a boy is establishing himself in his life work and is wondering if it will soon bring him to his adult role as husband and provider.

"Woman's Work"

Since this is the usual and generally accepted pattern, the woman who does not marry, who instead seeks a career in business or industry, is looked upon as unfortunate, as failing to perform her proper womanly function, and sometimes as a "misfit." At the same time, because younger women starting in industry have been considered only temporary, management has hesitated to develop them for supervisory or executive positions or even to train them for skilled work. As a result factories have developed a group of jobs which require little skill and training, into which women can come and go without disrupting the work; and these jobs have become accepted as "woman's work."

Furthermore, in all things having to do with factory work or machines women were considered to be less able than men. It was natural, therefore, that women's jobs should be paid less than men. This was reasonable as long as women were restricted to separate and lower-skilled jobs, since the pay differentials could be rationalized on the basis of the difference in the work. In many cases, however, men's jobs which were of no greater skill than the women's jobs were paid at a higher rate; and for jobs which were held by either men or women, the women were usually paid less. This pay differential for equivalent types of work was usually rationalized on the basis that women were poorer workers, that they were lighter and weaker than men and could not work as hard, that they had to be assisted with heavy work, that they did not turn out as much work, and that the quality of their work was poorer. With this precedent, when women recently began moving into men's jobs, many companies managed to maintain the women in the accepted inferior role by means of a systematic pay differential.

Women in Men's Jobs

These two factors, the inferior status of women's work and the lower rate of pay, give rise to certain difficulties when

introducing women into men's jobs. When a woman first comes into what has been considered a man's job, the men on the job almost always react unfavorably. They express doubts as to whether she can do the work; they often ignore her and give her no help in learning the job; they do not try to protect her while she is adjusting to the new work, but stand by and criticize her; they point to every mistake as showing that a woman cannot really handle such difficult work. At the same time, they are often worried by her presence and wonder if women will displace men on the job. If the company pays her the same rate as the men, they feel that they have lost status since they are worth no more than a woman, and the other men workers may kid them about doing women's work. If the company pays her less for the same job, they worry for fear the company may eventually cut the rate for all of them or replace all the men with the cheaper women. In this very unfriendly atmosphere, with no assistance from the group, the woman worker often fails in her job or gives up.

Women as Supervisors

The advancement of women to supervisory jobs has always been a problem. In the first place, there is the general belief that women make poor supervisors, that they are too emotional and "take things personally," that they cannot command the loyalty and respect of their subordinates nor the co-operation of their equals. In the face of such beliefs, which appear among executives as well as workers, women are rarely given a chance at supervisory positions. And when occasionally one is given such an opportunity, her superiors are always doubtful, as if to say, "We know women don't usually make good supervisors, so we really don't expect you to succeed." At the same time, especially if she is the only woman foreman or supervisor among a group of men, the other supervisors treat her much as the new woman worker is treated by the men on the job. Instead of accepting her as one of them and helping her adjust to the new job, they stand aloof and watch her critically,

expecting her to fail. In this atmosphere of distrust and expectation of failure every move she makes is watched critically. If she asks for help, it shows that she does not know the job; if she does not ask for help, she is acting as if she knew everything; if the strain begins to get her down so that she is irritable and acts annoyed, then she is acting "just like a woman;" and it all goes to prove that women do not make good supervisors. Under such conditions the probability of failure is high.

The fact that women in our society are generally considered inferior and expected to be subordinate to men also creates problems when placing women in supervisory positions. Most men dislike the idea of working under a woman, and, no matter how competent she may be, they feel a loss of status in taking orders from a woman. Even if the individual man accepts the idea of having a woman for a boss, his friends are sure to make it hard for him, commenting on it and kidding him about it. Among older men, especially those accustomed to ruling their wives and families with an iron hand, subordination to a woman boss is unthinkable. Because of these attitudes management is always reluctant to place a woman over a group of men and usually tries to use them only for groups of women.

Even when placed in charge of other women, however, the woman supervisor has difficulties. For the most part women themselves prefer to be supervised by men, and few express a preference for a woman as their boss. They usually complain that the woman supervisor is apt to be unfriendly, or too critical, or too concerned with petty details, or too strict a disciplinarian. Sometimes these attitudes and criticisms seem to be expressions of jealousy and competition, but in many cases they are based on real weaknesses in the performance of women supervisors. For one thing, in many cases women are put in supervisory positions without sufficient training and they do not know how to act as a boss or how to manage those under them. Newly promoted men, too, often have this same handicap; their failures are taken as evidence of individual

weaknesses, but the failure of a woman brands all women as poor supervisors. Actually, much of the behavior of women supervisors is typical of new supervisors generally. Any new supervisor who feels unsure of himself, who feels that his boss is watching him critically, is likely to demand perfect behavior and performance from his people, to be critical of minor mistakes, and to try too hard to please his boss. A woman supervisor, responding to the insecurity and uncertainty of her position as a woman, knowing that she is being watched both critically and doubtfully, feels obliged to try even harder. And for doing this she is said to be "acting just like a woman."

In spite of the difficulties, however, it has been found possible in many instances to move women into new kinds of jobs and into higher-status positions. The supposed limitations of women in industry have, in fact, been found to be myths based merely on their inexperience and not on any real evidence or experiment. In recent years the frantic grasping at any straw to relieve the manpower shortage has clearly shown that there is not on the whole a great difference between the work that men can do and the work that women can do. This is especially true of jobs requiring skill and mechanical knowledge rather than strength and endurance, since it has been clearly shown that with proper training women can do even the most skilled work. It has become evident that women succeed or fail in industrial jobs generally not so much because of their physical or mental ability but because of the social situations in which they work. Quite simply, women usually succeed in their jobs when they are expected to succeed and helped to succeed, when their supervisors have faith and their work groups are friendly; and they generally fail when they are surrounded by doubt and hostility. Finding or creating the proper social environment should be the first consideration of management when placing women on any new jobs, for women can generally be expected to succeed when the setting is conducive to success.

CHAPTER XII

PROBLEMS OF CO-OPERATION

A factory is a co-ordinated enterprise directed to the production of goods within certain limits of price and quality. It is also a complex social system, variously segmented, in which each individual has a certain place, each has certain functions and activities, and each achieves certain rewards and satisfactions. The functions, positions, and satisfactions of all the individuals are interrelated and interdependent, and all are ultimately part of the productive enterprise. It is important that all the roles of all the individuals be co-ordinated so that each is adjusted to the needs of the organization as a whole, and for maximum efficiency it is necessary to have a high degree of willing co-operation between individuals and between groups.

Many instances of poor co-operation have been cited in the course of this discussion, and there has been an implication throughout that certain situations, certain policies, and some types of organization discourage co-operation and teamwork. Because the need for effective co-operation is so great, and because the factors which encourage it are so often misunderstood, it seems advisable to review some of these points and to relate them specifically to the problem of co-operation. At first glance, the problem of getting everyone in a factory to co-operate together for the good of the whole seems an overwhelming task. With our structural picture of the factory as a social organization, however, it is possible to point out four particular spots, four kinds of relationships, which may be seen as the keys to effective co-operation in industry. * These are (1) relations within the work group, (2) relations between the group and its boss, (3) relations between groups, and (4) relations between different levels from top to bottom. A maximum of efficiency and teamwork in these four spots is almost an absolute prerequisite for maximum efficiency in the production of goods and for maximum employee satisfaction.

CO-OPERATION WITHIN THE WORK GROUP

Because the technical demands of jobs vary tremendously, because of differences in organization, in policies, in personalities, and so on, it is not possible to write a precise formula for obtaining and maintaining co-operation in any and all work groups all the time. It is possible, however, to describe the behavior of a work group which has a high degree of teamwork, to describe some of the symptoms of poor co-operation, and to prescribe certain changes when these symptoms appear. In a group which is co-operating well, the members help one another willingly without waiting to be directed. They accept whatever jobs are assigned to them without feeling injured or jealous of their fellows. They do not carry tales, or criticize one another, and do not quarrel or refuse to work together. They accept newcomers to the group and help them to get acquainted with the work and with the other workers. In most factories there are some groups like this, working together harmoniously with a high degree of satisfaction. On the other hand, there are many groups, some of which have been described earlier in this discussion, in which the behavior is quite different. These groups are characterized by quarreling, suspicion, and jealousy, behavior which indicates lack of co-operation and teamwork. Workers in these groups are reluctant to help one another and do so grudgingly when they have to. They complain about one another to the boss, refuse to do certain kinds of work, refuse to work with one another, and are hostile and stand-offish with new members of the group. In most cases there are certain discouraging factors in the work situation, certain problems of individual workers, or weaknesses in policy and organization which are responsible for this disharmony and which can be corrected.

Problems of Individual Workers

Individual problems of adjustment, insecurity, and desire for personal reward and satisfaction have been discussed at some length already (chapters VIII, IX, X), with the implication that

these disturbed individuals are often responsible for upsetting the morale and teamwork of a whole work group. The person who is worried about himself, the one who is overambitious and not getting enough recognition, the one who feels inadequate to do the work, the one who needs constant reassurance and approval, the one who feels that he is losing status, all of these are too intent on themselves to co-operate effectively with others. Women, foreigners, Negroes, old-timers, newcomers, in all these groups and others there are individuals who are too engrossed with their own problems to give a thought to their work groups as a whole. And the preoccupation of each one of them may discourage co-operation in his whole work group. An old-timer, for example, sometimes feels very insecure when new workers are introduced into his work group. He believes that his status and security lies in his superior skill and knowledge of the work. He fears that he may be supplanted by younger and cheaper workers if he passes on his knowledge. And so he keeps his skills a secret and refuses to help the newcomers learn the job. This behavior is especially common when the newcomers are women or Negroes or new foreign groups. Obviously this sort of behavior on the part of the old-timers breeds problems of adjustment for the newcomers.

Helping these disturbed individuals to meet their personal crises and adjust to the work situation often relieves the tension in a whole work group and encourages group co-operation. Sometimes a sympathetic boss can handle such a worker by giving him extra encouragement and attention for a time. Sometimes he can be moved to a more congenial work group where he can adapt himself more easily. Occasionally a social service worker may find home problems which are responsible for the worker's disturbance. But the most effective method for dealing with these individuals who upset their work groups is through a personnel counseling organization or by using its methods. The interviewing method used by the counselor allows the disturbed and disturbing individual to "blow off

steam," to think out and re-examine his own problems, and to re-orient and readjust himself to his work situation. At the same time the counselor listens impersonally and unobtrusively to other members of the work group, relieving their emotional tension and so improving their relations with one another. When this method of personnel counseling is used effectively and efficiently it not only straightens out the disturbed individual, but it improves morale and co-operation in the whole work group. Although foremen cannot give the workers' problems as much or as impersonal attention as the counselor because they are themselves a part of the work situation, still the sympathetic ear of a foreman can go a long way in preventing individual disturbances and even in helping disturbed workers to adjust to the work situation.

Unstable Work Situations

It is generally difficult to develop good co-operation in an unstable and changing work situation. Full co-operation usually depends upon the development of regular habits of work and patterns of friendship over a period of time. To pull together smoothly, the group should know the work and each other so that they know what to expect and how to act together. Technological changes, frequent changes in personnel, and poorly organized work routines are all discouraging to co-operation in a work group. In these situations the members of the group feel unsure of themselves, unacquainted with the work or with one another, preoccupied with their personal needs for security and recognition, and they lose their incentive and desire to co-operate with one another.

Most technological changes and some changes in personnel are unavoidable, and some kinds of work are not easily adapted to organized routines. But with proper handling the disrupting effects of these situations can be reduced to a minimum in the work group and failure to co-operate can be only very temporary. In any one work group changes in personnel can sometimes be made only infrequently and in small numbers. When major changes involving a lot of workers must be made,

the workers' resistance and group disruption can often be kept at a minimum by preparing the group in advance. If the proposed change is explained to them, if they are permitted to express their ideas about the change and even asked for suggestions in handling it, members of the work group generally show much less resistance and disturbance when the change actually takes place. They have had a chance to get used to the *idea* of new workers on their job, they know *why* new workers are being introduced, and they are not, therefore, so preoccupied with personal anxieties and feelings of insecurity. In handling technological changes the work group can be prepared in much the same way, so that the members of the group do not feel "cast away" and worried about their future, their jobs, and their value to the company. Both in personnel and technological changes, this practice of preparing the work group and allowing them a voice in planning the change has a satisfactory effect on the morale and co-operation of the group, *even when* the change actually does lower their status, decrease their value to the company, or threaten their opportunities for recognition and advancement.

Groups whose work cannot be well organized or routinized, groups in which there is necessarily a frequent change of pace and much shifting of jobs, can often be encouraged to co-operation by similar methods. If the members of such a work group understand the necessity for this kind of instability in their work situation, if they feel free to make suggestions about organizing the work and developing job routines, they usually work together smoothly and efficiently. An alert, understanding boss, who is willing to permit the participation of his group in planning the work, can often promote co-operation even in the most unstable work situation.

THE BOSS AND THE WORK GROUP

The Autocratic Boss

On the other hand, the boss who is the antithesis of this, the boss who is neither broadminded nor understanding, who

permits his workers no voice in planning their work, who guards his authority jealously and rules his group with an iron hand, is probably the most important single cause of poor co-operation in the work group. Some of these autocratic bosses can be found in every factory, and their behavior has been described in detail earlier in this study. These are the ones who say mightily, "I do the thinking around here. You do what you're told!" These are the ones whose work groups yield too many disturbed individuals, whose workers quarrel and are jealous of their status or unite together against their boss and co-operate against the whole. And these are the ones who undermine their groups with too much pressure, constantly nagging and criticizing, breathing down their necks and telling them off.

Work groups with this sort of supervision usually respond either by very close co-operation among the members against the boss or by general group disintegration and lack of unity. The first type of response is especially common in work groups which have been together a long time. The workers are well integrated and friendly with one another and they co-operate together in excluding the boss, hindering him, and trying to keep him from making a good showing. They often co-operate to restrict output and limit production, and they feel that such restriction is necessary to protect themselves from the excessive demands of their boss. In newer groups friction within the work group usually develops as a result of this pressure from the boss. The boss's constant criticism and authoritarian attitude create anxieties and irritations among the workers, and they take it out in complaining and quarreling with one another. A set-up man who had been in such a situation explained his reactions, as follows:

It works this way. I go to the foreman and ask him about something and he gets sarcastic to me; and he doesn't give me any help, or he tells me to figure it out for myself, or that I'm the set-up man and what do I want him to do about it. And then one of the girls comes up and asks me a question and I get nasty to her just because this guy was sarcastic to me. Like one of the girls will come up and

ask me to help her, or she'll ask me a question about how to do something. And I'll tell her to do it herself, I haven't got time, or to use her head and maybe she wouldn't have to ask so many questions. And it isn't because I don't want to help her, because usually I would. It's just that it makes me feel better to be yelling at her after somebody's been yelling at me all the time. Now, if I didn't feel that way, I'd tell her, "Sure I'll help you." And if I didn't have time right then, I'd tell her to wait awhile and then I'd be down to help her. I like to be helpful to people when I can, but when you got someone over you that's making things miserable for you, why you just naturally take it out on the ones you got beneath you. It worked that way with everybody down at the plant. Pretty soon everybody was yelling at everybody else.¹

In another group the foreman tried to increase the efficiency of his group by using the record of one outstanding worker as a mark for the others to shoot at. Every morning he talked to each worker, asked him why he was not doing as well as the top man, criticized him for not showing more improvement, or bawled him out for falling below his own record. As a result most of the group felt that those who had a high record or showed much improvement were a threat to them, and they tried to protect themselves by criticizing these outstanding workers and treating them as outcasts. The best workers then complained of the unfriendliness of the others, said that they had to choose between getting along with the group and pleasing the boss, and some of them finally quit rather than work under these conditions.

Clearly, the cure for this kind of group disruption is the elimination of this kind of supervision. Immediate wholesale removal of all supervisors using these methods is, of course, out of the question, since in some plants it would mean the loss of most of the supervisors and in all plants it would have very serious effects on the morale of other employees—if indeed the union or company policy would permit such high-handed annihilation. Retraining supervisors to use other methods, readjusting the supervisors' own work situations, and relieving

¹B. B. Gardner, *Case Studies for Interviewing Methods and Techniques*. (University of Chicago, 1943), p. 61

pressures upon the foremen themselves comprise a more practical program, albeit a slow and tedious one, for relieving disruption and promoting co-operation at the work level.

Prescription for Effective Foremen

Co-operation within a work group and between the group and their boss presupposes a lot of give and take on the part of all those involved, including the boss. A prescription for more effective foremen comprises techniques for "giving" to his work group, that is, giving them enough satisfaction and security, both individually and as a group, that co-operation will follow spontaneously and inevitably. Part of this giving lies in permitting the group some voice in planning their work and hearing their suggestions for changes and improvements. Another part lies in recognizing his workers as a group and realizing that he is a part of it. Acting proud of the group, praising them for co-operation, and saying "we" instead of "I," remembering to reward the whole group with praise and not just the outstanding individuals—all these are good strong stimulants to group co-operation.

Still another part of the foreman's contribution to spontaneous group teamwork lies in showing an interest in his workers as people. By and large, the foreman who is friendly to his workers will reap a harvest in friendliness and co-operation from them. The satisfaction and security of knowing that their boss is a friend rather than a hostile critic goes a long way in promoting teamwork within the group. Furthermore, the foreman who listens to problems of courtship or plans for a new home, who remembers to inquire about the new baby or the invalid mother, will learn a great deal about his workers. He will hear a lot about the work situation, too, complaints and hindrances and suggestions which would be kept from a less friendly boss. By using this information cautiously, by getting several opinions on suggestions and all sides on complaints and controversies, the foreman can sometimes relieve tensions in group relationships and prevent hin-

drances to group efficiency, thereby promoting greater group co-operation. Because of the nature of their relationship with him, however, because their fate is in his hands in a manner of speaking, members of the work group are inevitably sensitive to their foreman's reactions and response to them. They are quick to accuse him of favoritism and cry "unfair" if he listens to only one side of a story or takes hasty action without spending enough time listening to enough people. Extreme tact and caution is, therefore, necessary in acting upon the information he gleans from his workers; and often the mere fact that he is interested enough to listen and try to understand will in itself relieve tensions and stimulate co-operation without his taking any direct action.

Changing the Foremen's Methods

Such a prescription is easy enough to write, but getting foremen to follow it is something else again. Obviously these techniques cannot be *forced* on the foremen by methods already damned in the handling of work groups. Arbitrarily telling foremen what methods to use and insisting that they use them will generally produce the same disruption and disturbance in their ranks as arbitrary pressure produces in the work groups. Many training programs for foremen are by themselves not much more helpful, since they merely define the methods approved by management without giving the foremen any incentive for changing their methods and without finding out why the foremen have been high-handed, autocratic, and hypercritical of their work groups. In a few cases foremen may use these methods from habit or simply because they do not know any other way, and in these cases a little training and suggestion in new techniques may be enough. Much more often, however, foremen disrupt their work groups by too much pressure and criticism because they themselves are disturbed. Like members of their work groups, in fact like everybody else in a factory, foremen expect certain satisfactions from their roles, foremen have anxieties and problems of status and

security, and foremen respond to criticism and pressure from their boss by "taking it out" on their subordinates. And foremen can be "cured" of these disturbances by the same methods prescribed for handling work groups. In short, a foreman can be encouraged to handle his work group more effectively by permitting his participation in decisions from above, by giving him the sympathetic ear of an understanding boss, and by generally relieving pressure and criticism on him from above.

CO-OPERATION BETWEEN GROUPS

Another weak point in co-operation in most factories is found in the relationship between technical or staff people and the operating or production organization. Many personnel officers, engineers, and other technicians have direct contact with the shops, and often they can perform their functions effectively only with the co-operation and assistance of the shop supervisors. Technical improvements introduced by an engineer or proposed changes in personnel practices often fail if the foremen are critical and unco-operative and try to discredit the efforts of these technicians.

The difficulties inherent in relations between these organizations have been discussed in some detail in an earlier chapter (IV), but the case for effective co-operation between them is by no means hopeless. As in the work group, such co-operation calls for give and take all around; but because they are often looked upon as outsiders intruding on an organization which feels itself adequate and complete, the burden of giving must lie with the staff and technical people. Unhappily, these experts, eager to make a showing and frustrated by resistance in the shops, often try to force co-operation through weight of authority, which inevitably discourages co-operation even more. If, on the other hand, they are understanding of the foreman's problems, if they agree with him that their presence creates difficulties in his organization, if they are careful not to censure him to his superiors, and if they see that

he gets credit when credit is due, much of his resistance will disappear.

This is a large order for those at the lower levels of staff and technical organizations, the ones who have most contact with the shops; and to function effectively it is imperative that they have behind them an organization whose policies and practices permit them to fill this order. These employees at the lower levels of engineering, personnel, or accounting organizations are just as much disturbed by personal anxieties, desire for recognition, and pressures from the boss as anybody else in the factory. And like everybody else they can do their jobs more effectively if they are relieved of these disturbances. An engineer, for example, cannot be expected to give shop people their due if his reputation in his own organization depends upon competing with them and keeping ahead of them. And the personnel man who is subjected to constant criticism and demands from his boss cannot be expected to be understanding and tactful in his relations with foremen. In promoting co-operation between organizations the burden of effort must come from the staff or technical people, but their best effort can be assured only by having alert and understanding supervision in their own organizations.

CO-OPERATION BETWEEN LEVELS

For maximum efficiency in the organization as a whole and for maximum satisfaction for the individuals, the give and take of co-operation is essential between all levels of the structure from top management on down to the work level. A hypercritical, autocratic executive at the top can "gum the works" all the way down the line by too much pressure, with supervisors at each level trying to protect themselves by putting pressure on those below. Clearly, the formula for smooth, effective co-operation throughout the organization calls for a chain of understanding bosses from top to bottom of the structure, each using the same methods prescribed for dealing with foremen and work groups. Besides that, however, it also

calls for a chain of understanding *subordinates* from the work level on up.

Understanding Company Objectives

In order to maintain co-operation in the whole organization, it is necessary for employees at each level to understand and accept the objectives of the organization. In order to feel a part of the whole, that is, beyond their immediate work level and supervisor, it is important for all employees to have some understanding of the whole. Employees should have a feeling that the company's goal is worth their effort; they should feel themselves part of the company and take pride in their contribution to its goal. This means that the company's objectives must be such as to inspire confidence in the intentions of management and belief that each will get rewards and satisfactions by working for these objectives. If through lack of understanding or from actual past experience the employees believe that the organization can and will attain its goals by sacrificing employee interests, then there is certainly no incentive to co-operate towards these goals. If, on the other hand, they understand the company's goal, and if experience has given them confidence in management, employees will sometimes accept temporary sacrifices for the good of the whole organization. It is not unheard of, for example, for employees to accept willingly a general reduction in pay in order to help their company meet conditions of stiff competition or in times of depression.

Perspective at Different Levels

Top management usually has a much stronger attachment to the company and a clearer understanding of its objectives than lower levels. This is perhaps inevitable since in a sense the company is theirs to direct and control. They are the ones who determine the goals of the company, and they naturally choose goals which will give them personal satisfactions. They are, therefore, so identified with the organization as a whole,

and their personal rewards and recognition are so closely related to the achievements of the company that its success becomes their personal success and its failure their failure. The president or manager of an organization gets immediate, direct reward and recognition from its success. He not only makes money but also he is recognized as a successful executive, and he receives the congratulations of his friends and associates when he exhibits an annual statement showing the successful performance of his company.

Going down the line, however, there is a gradual falling off of interest in the success of the company as the lower levels have less and less part in forming company goals and receive less and less immediate reward for its success. Below the level of superintendent, and sometimes including him, employees get little acclaim for the company's annual statement of performance, and they often make no more money because of the company's success. These lower levels identify themselves with some unit within the company rather than with the organization as a whole. And each feels that his personal rewards and recognition depend upon the performance of his unit rather than upon the success of the whole. They have little part in determining the objectives of the company or even of their own units; they merely take the goals set by those above. Thus the department chief is told to increase output, reduce costs, or improve quality in his unit, and his success depends upon how well he meets these demands, not upon how well the company performs.

This difference in perspective at different levels is to some extent unavoidable. In many cases, however, the lower levels in the organization are so poorly informed about company objectives and so cut off from participation in determining goals that they become antagonistic to the company and hostile to the goal-makers. They believe that the company is run for the satisfaction of top management and that the executives will reap a harvest of rewards and recognition at the expense of lower levels. Often enough they are right about this, but

right or wrong, such beliefs are not conducive to effective co-operation in the company as a whole.

Top management, when it is aware of this hostility, generally believes that it is due merely to the fact that lower levels have not been properly informed about the goals of the company. Many top executives sincerely believe that the decisions which they have thought out carefully are for the best interests of the whole organization. Believing, too, that others would come to the same conclusions and readily accept these decisions if given the same facts, they try to convince the lower levels of their rightness by presenting their information and explaining their reasoning. But people at lower levels, having a different perspective on the organization as a whole and a different orientation to it, interpret this information differently and often come to quite different conclusions. Furthermore, if they feel cut off from management, hostile and suspicious, they automatically distrust the facts and logics presented. Other top executives simply take it for granted that the outstanding success of the company is the accepted goal of all employees, an assumption which often breeds more hostility toward management and toward the objectives which it proclaims.

Clearly, this discord and antagonism toward management and the organization as a whole calls for changes in company policy and management practices. If the workers and lower level supervisors are permitted to take part in making decisions which affect them directly, if they are at least given a chance to express their sentiments and ideas about these decisions, much of their resistance to management and company objectives disappears. Instead of feeling excluded, antagonistic, and "pushed around," they begin to feel that they are really a part of the company and they begin to take pride in the company's success to which they are contributing. In many factories management has had the unhappy experience of introducing improved working hours, new washrooms, or a wage-incentive system calculated to please the employees, only to find that their subordinates actually object to these changes

or show no gratitude for them. In many cases these same changes would have been well received and greeted as improvements by the employees if they had been consulted about them beforehand and given a chance to make suggestions. In many other cases changes which management thinks will improve working conditions and morale are, in actual fact, no improvement at all from the workers' point of view. Such misunderstandings are especially common when direction and control is limited to a few top executives who are far removed from the work situation and have little contact with lower levels beyond their immediate subordinates.

Consulting with Subordinates

It should not be supposed, of course, that every level in the organization can participate in making every decision, or that they have any desire to do so. Workers do not expect to run the business, and employees at every level realize that their supervisors have a broader knowledge of the needs of the company and are better prepared to make most decisions. But all employees at all levels want to feel that they are a part of the company and that their ideas and interests will be considered when decisions are made. They want to be able to influence and contribute to decisions which affect them directly, and they like to be informed about decisions and have the effects of decisions explained to them in advance.

Some managements do attempt to communicate their ideas to the workers, to inform them about decisions and explain changes in advance. Some do this through company magazines or public address systems; others use bulletin boards; and still others rely on the supervisors to pass information on down to the work level. One way or another all these methods of communication have the advantage of keeping the lower levels informed about management's thinking, but all of them have the weakness of being one-way channels. They do not permit the lower levels to communicate their ideas to management.

Consulting Through the Union

An active union which has access to management provides a channel through which ideas and information can flow upward from the work level. And because it can put pressure on management to consider these ideas and information, it enables the workers to have some influence on management decisions and company objectives. In many cases management asks the union leaders for their ideas about anticipated changes, and union leaders may even participate in making some decisions. When management is alert and the union active, for example, decisions on employee benefits are seldom made without consulting the union and giving it a chance to present the workers' ideas and opinions.

Labor-Management Committees

Another formalized system of worker-management co-operation which has shown rapid development recently is the Labor-Management Committee, sponsored by the War Production Board for the purpose of increasing output of war materials. These committees are composed of a group selected by the workers and a group selected by management who work together in trying to solve difficulties which interfere with efficient production. Most of these committees sponsor a suggestion system by which employees' ideas may be put in use; and together they make plans for reducing turnover and absenteeism, work over problems of organizing and planning the work, and generally try to iron out the wrinkles in efficiency. On the whole these committees have proved very effective, and they have generally resulted in improved morale and co-operation both among workers and between workers and management.

No matter how carefully they may be developed, however, even these committees have their limitations. Although they do provide a means by which the workers' representatives can participate and co-operate with management, it does not follow automatically that the mass of the workers will feel that they are properly represented or that they are actually taking

part. As is sometimes the case with unions, the majority of the workers may be apathetic and uninterested even though members of the committee are active and enthusiastic. And even when the other workers do feel adequately represented and approve of the work of the committee, they cannot be expected to take as much interest or get as much satisfaction as those few who are actually members of the committee. Furthermore, when introducing any new method of co-operation with lower levels, by holding meetings or setting up committees, management cannot expect immediate, whole-hearted response. For one thing, the ability to work together on committees or to express one's self clearly in meetings is something that has to be learned by practice; and a great deal of patience is required of management before these methods will produce effective co-operation. For another thing, if they have been ruled by autocratic practices for a long time, the workers cannot be expected to change their attitudes and responses overnight just because management expresses a desire to co-operate. And, what is not nearly so obvious, a management which has been using these practices for a long time cannot be expected to change its methods automatically just because it desires to do so. Especially in the early development of such programs for co-operation, executives must watch themselves closely to see that they are really trying to co-operate, really encouraging their subordinates to work out the problems, and not falling back on the old practices of doing the thinking and letting the committee merely sell the ideas.

Conclusions

Although consultation between the higher levels of management and workers, either through unions or through Labor-Management Committees, has much to recommend it, such communication may have the serious disadvantage of excluding supervisors at the intermediate levels. Short-circuited by the happy relationship between their big bosses and their subordinates, these foremen, department chiefs, and division heads

are likely to feel squeezed out, insecure, and worried about their authority unless they, too, are admitted to partnership with top management. Communication back and forth between the top and bottom of the organization is not enough for harmonious understanding and effective co-operation in the total organization. Along with it must go a practice of permitting each level to communicate and participate freely with the levels immediately above and below it, so that there is a chain of communication, participation, and co-operation from top to bottom and back again through the whole organization.

CHAPTER XIII

UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL STRUCTURE

A TOOL FOR THE EXECUTIVE

It is important for executives, especially the Big Boss, to understand and keep in touch with the society in which his organization operates, and to know how changes in the society will affect his concern. At the same time he must be able to stimulate and direct his organization so as to keep it constantly in adjustment to the external world. In other words, the top executive may be said to need two sorts of tools, an understanding of two social structures. His first tool is an understanding of the nature of the society in which he operates; and his second, an understanding of the nature of his own organization which will enable him to direct its activities, to set in motion necessary changes, and to hold it together as an effective enterprise. It is this second type of understanding with which we have been concerned, since an understanding of the human problems and processes in industry is as essential as a knowledge of technical processes.

The Human Structure

To many executives the idea that a business is a human organization with a complex structure of both formal and informal relationships is rather startling. In fact, when the informal structure of work situations is first discussed with them, many executives ask at once, "How can you get rid of it?" This informal organization is something which they did not plan; it arose without benefit of administrative decision and without executive approval; it is something extraneous to the formal organization. Therefore, they reason, it should be eliminated.

It would be simpler for the executive, of course, if one could draw up an organization chart and say to the individuals, "These are your positions and functions and this is

the way you must behave," and have them accept it and act just as directed. It would be nice if the superior could decide just how he wanted his subordinates to think and act and have them do it. Unfortunately, people just don't work that way; the social organization of an industry just can not be "got rid of"; it cannot even be ignored without danger of disrupting or even destroying the organization. The best one can do is try to understand it so that he can act intelligently in it and about it.

There are many executives who consider this human element interesting but unimportant. They say, "Why should we worry about these things? We're doing all right. Our companies are successful. We are successes." All of which is true. The country is full of successful executives and companies. And in watching many of these men in action we see that they often *do* have a high degree of understanding of the human structure of their own organizations and are taking it into consideration in every decision they make. They may be said to operate on a rule-of-thumb basis developed from long experience without any particular awareness of the principles involved. In many cases, however, they have a great deal of difficulty when they have to deal with a new organization or a new type of activity because their experience has not prepared them for the new problems.

During the present period of rapid growth and change, many small companies have suddenly become large with disastrous results. Companies which were once well-integrated, smooth-running organizations with high morale have become chaotic; and their top executives, formerly very successful, have become ineffective. Time and again we hear comments that "the job has outgrown him" or that "he is out of his depth"; and this usually means that the rule-of-thumb, "instinctive" methods, which worked so well with a small and stable concern, are not adequate for a large company in a state of flux. You cannot run these plants by "feel" any more than the pilot of a four-motor bomber can fly "by the seat of his pants"

It is important for the top executive to recognize not only the human structure but also his own very special place in it. Because of his position at the top, he has tremendous power to affect morale and well being in every part of the structure. This does not mean, however, that the organization is merely an extension of himself which is completely responsive to his will, or that the organization will accept his decisions and commands and carry them out just because he made them. In spite of the power of his position, the top executive cannot decide arbitrarily what the organization will be like and how it will function; and it is only within the general framework of the formal organization that he can determine its structure. The skilled executive can, however, use his knowledge of the organization and of his position in it to *permit* the development of an effective whole.

Factory Integration

Observation of many different organizations has made it clear that each factory and each business concern is an integrated whole, and that every action or decision of the Big Boss affects the social structure and the attitudes of the people in some way. This is true not only of decisions which concern human relations directly; for every technical change and every change in accounting or controls has its repercussions in distant parts of the system. It is all too easy to slip into a sort of "compartmentalized" thinking in which each problem is considered as if it involved only a small segment of the system and as if it could be settled in isolation without affecting the whole. The foreman considers Joe's problem as though it concerned only Joe and himself, as if it had no significance for the rest of the group. Or the engineer decides about a new type of machine as though technical problems were the only things involved. As a matter of fact, almost everyone acts in this detached way at times, even while acknowledging the importance of considering the broader aspects of a situation.

Status Relationships

Another important human element which executives cannot afford to overlook is the system of status relationships. Time and again we see serious disturbances on the part of individuals and even loss of morale for entire groups as a result of some act or executive decision which disregarded the status system and upset status relationships. As pointed out earlier, these status distinctions are not a simple matter of wage differences or seniority but are subtle expressions of the way individuals think about themselves, one another, and their jobs. And since status is so subtle, it is very easy for the busy executive to overlook it in dealing with distant parts of the organization. Often he makes over-simplified assumptions about it; he feels that two jobs are of equal status because they have the same rate of pay, or that a transfer without cut in pay will not be felt to be a loss of status. When he acts on such assumptions, he is often surprised at the reactions he encounters; and he usually ends up by being extremely annoyed at the people involved and feels that they are being "childish."

Because disturbances arising out of problems of status are so prevalent and because status anxieties are so destructive to morale and efficiency, executives should understand these problems and give them careful attention. In order to do this, every executive should study the status systems within his organization, recognize their many ramifications, and become familiar with status symbols and the sentiments about them. Even with all this knowledge and understanding, executives cannot hope to eliminate status problems completely; but they can certainly avoid those thoughtless acts which cause so many unnecessary disturbances, and they can anticipate and prepare for problems which cannot be avoided.

Change and Insecurity

Any change in the organization not only has far-reaching repercussions, but also it almost invariably results in feelings of insecurity and status anxiety for some individuals. This

is especially true, of course, when the change in organization means a shift in functions and relative status for some people. Even when the change is an obvious improvement, however, even when it will ultimately result in greater effectiveness and improved morale, the individuals involved usually go through a period of uncertainty and anxiety at the time of change. This occurs even when they see the ultimate value of the change, for each one is immediately concerned with its effect upon himself. The immediate superior and higher executives can help this condition and relieve anxieties by reassuring the group in various ways. They can discuss in advance the problems and the reasons for the change with the group immediately involved; they can keep them informed on the progress of the change; and after the change has been made, its effects can be discussed with the group. At the same time, the superiors can watch the reactions and attitudes of the group and let them know that their ideas are being taken into account. In fact, during any period of uncertainty when there is apt to be anxiety over impending events, it is well for the superiors to increase their contacts and interaction with the group. The availability and interest of the boss during times of trouble is in itself very reassuring.

Handling Changes

With regard to how change in organization should be handled there seem to be two schools of thought. One has it that the change should be decided completely in advance and the lower levels informed only when it is finally put into effect. The change then comes formally from the top down, and even though it may have originated at some intermediate level, it is cleared through to the top before lower levels are informed. This plan has the approval of many executives because it gives them the opportunity to consider every proposed change, many of which are squashed or drastically revised before they are put into effect. Further weight is lent to this practice by the fact that news of an impending change usu-

ally gives rise to extensive rumors and disturbances, especially in the supervisory structure. Unfortunately, however, it is often impossible to keep the grapevine from picking up rumors of an impending major change even though it is meant to come as a surprise, so that in any case the organization goes through a period of rumor and speculation which reduces its efficiency. Furthermore, the reaction to a last-minute announcement of a major change is often terrific. To call in a group and announce that beginning immediately their organization will be shifted around and their jobs changed, produces a more violent reaction and has a more lasting and devastating effect upon morale than does a change which has been anticipated. The group usually feels that the change has been completely arbitrary, that no consideration has been given them; and in many cases they do everything possible to resist the change.

The opposite method of handling changes by informing the affected groups in advance, by discussing the change with them and considering their ideas in planning it, has much to recommend it. This method has the advantage of permitting all those involved to feel that they are being considered and that they even have a part in planning the change. It is true that this method is accompanied by a lot of rumor and speculation, talk and disturbance *before* the change goes into effect; but by the time the change actually takes place, emotional reaction and anxieties over it have largely disappeared so that adjustment to the change proceeds smoothly. On the whole, it seems that the more those involved can participate in planning an important change, the better the change will be received and the more nearly it will achieve its objectives

Stability and Adjustability

An organization and especially one with high morale has a stability, an equilibrium, which involves everything from the concept of a fair day's work to the kinds of relationships and patterns of interaction between people at all levels. This stability also means an ability to resist rapid change, to pro-

tect itself from disturbing innovations. The top executive, unfortunately, is often in a position of trying to bring about these innovations. From where he sits the relationships of his firm to the whole economic and social system of the society are of prime importance, and he is concerned with having the company make more and more effective adaptation to this social environment. As a result he is constantly introducing new ideas, initiating changes, and demanding improvements in the way the organization functions. In other words, he tends to be concerned with making it more effective in achieving the objectives which he sets for it rather than with maintaining its internal stability. Almost inevitably, then, many of his demands and ideas smash headlong against the invisible wall of resistance by which the organization maintains its equilibrium. He often feels as if he were pounding a rubber ball which gives slightly under pressure but always returns to its former shape when the pressure is removed. Frustrated and irritated by this resistance, he may go on using his position and authority to put more and more pressure on the organization and even try to force drastic changes in organization and personnel.

In the interests of morale it is important to maintain a high degree of internal stability, and in the interests of the business as a successful, going concern it is important that the organization be adaptable to a changing outside world. To do both is a large order but that is the top executive's job, and it has been done successfully in many cases. By developing an atmosphere in which changes and improvements can be generated from within the organization rather than imposed from above, the skilled executive can eliminate much of the organization's resistance to change without forfeiting any of its stability. Such processes are slow, of course, since they depend on the development of new ways of thinking and acting on the part of a lot of people. But they will produce better results in total performance, in stability,

adaptability, and morale than the impatient demands of an irate top executive.

Listening to Subordinates

It must be remembered, however, that changes and improvements can be generated from within the organization only if there is easy communication up through the structure, and only when there is an understanding executive at the top who has a real knowledge of his organization. Such an executive must study social relationships as carefully as he studies technical and economic problems, and he must train himself to listen to what his subordinates have to say. The more he listens, the more his people will talk to him. And when he has trained himself to let them tell him, when he can restrain himself from over-reacting to partial information, he will find that he has established an easy communication so that he can have a better understanding of his organization and know more about what is going on. Not only that, but the processes which make this communication possible will in themselves tend to develop better morale and co-operation. Good intentions, however, will not make the process work. The executive has to take the initiative and go to people; he must make it easy for them to talk to him. If he does not do this, if he waits for them to come to him, if he shows any indifference, then the normal barriers between subordinate and superior will be reinforced and easy communication will rapidly wither away.

Recognizing Different Viewpoints

Finally, the top executive should recognize that his subordinates have points of view and desires different from his own. Because of his position in the structure, he himself tends to react in certain ways; but people in other positions act and think differently. All too often the man at the top lets the demands of his position and the pressures of his own desires distort his understanding of his subordinates. All too often he assumes that everybody thinks and feels as he does,

or else that they should. Frequently, too, we see top management operating on the basis of over-simplified concepts as to how the people below him are motivated and how they will react. The belief in economic motivations as the mainspring of all action, for example, leads again and again to difficulties, when executives assume that a wage increase, or a bonus, or an incentive system will cure the ills of an organization or will buy loyalty and high morale. Or again, we see an executive deciding on a course of action which to him seems perfectly sensible and acceptable and then developing elaborate arguments for its being equally acceptable to the subordinates affected by it. He tries to read into them his own desires and ambitions; he sees them as having the same understanding of the system; and he is constantly annoyed because they actually act differently from what he expects.

A TOOL FOR THE UNION LEADER

The union comprises one segment of the total pattern of relationships within a plant and it performs certain functions for its members. It is important, therefore, that union leaders have an understanding of the social organization of the plants in which they operate. The entire function of the union official is one of dealing with human relations, and he is concerned with problems of technology or costs only as they affect people. Thus his success as a union leader depends to a large extent upon his skill in maintaining effective relations with people in almost all parts of the structure. For that reason the understanding of the social structure of the factory and the knowledge of how to act within it is as vital to him as to the top executive.

Union Leader versus Executive

The chairman or president of the local is probably in a much more difficult position than is the top executive in the plant, because he is not only the leader and director of the union but he is also the servant of its members, the one

through whom they exert pressure on the management of the plant. The executive is either selected by the owner or directors or else gets his position through financial control in the concern. The union leader is generally selected by the union members, and he must please them to retain his position. The result is that executives are on the whole more secure in their positions than union officials and have greater freedom of action and decision.

Because of the differences in his position there are different factors to which the union leader must be especially alert. Unlike the executive, he does not have a position of authority which makes him the center of attention and causes subordinates to over-react to his slightest acts. He is not automatically the originator of action upon the workers but is, instead, the one upon whom they can act. Also he must respond to the workers by acting on their superiors; he must take their complaints up the line. And unless they feel that he can represent their interests effectively in his contacts with management, he loses their support. This means that often he must "do something" about extreme and even irrational demands, or make demands on management which he knows cannot be met.

Communicating with Members

He also has a basic problem in communication between himself and the members. While the union structure is simpler than the structure of the plant, there is still the problem of keeping the channels open so that the leaders are well informed as to the attitudes and expectations of the group and so that the group knows what is going on at the top. Lacking this, there is apt to be a growing dissatisfaction which ends in apathy or even revolt. Furthermore, for the purposes of handling grievances or bargaining with management, it is just as important for union leaders to know the workers' attitudes and what goes on at the work level as it is for management. It is most embarrassing, for example, for a union president to make a big fight for some concession on the grounds that the workers insist,

only to have it appear later that the workers do not want it at all. In settling particular grievances, too, it is often important that he understand the entire situation in which each complaint arises in order to engineer an effective settlement.

The union leader has always to try to understand the latent content of complaints, to try to find the factors which lie behind complaints before he can know what should be done about them. Furthermore, he has to see the factory as an inter-related system, and recognize that settling the demands of any one individual or group will usually give rise to adverse reactions in other individuals or groups. Serious friction within the union often arises out of feelings that the union is being run for the benefit of one group, or because the union gets a raise for one member of a department and not for the others.

An interesting case from this point of view was one involving a machine department in a large factory. The workers in this department were mostly skilled operators who fell into two grades of skill and of pay, a few being paid at \$1.35 an hour and the rest at \$1.25. One of the \$1.25 men became dissatisfied and wanted to know how he could get ahead. He complained to his foreman and his shop steward, and said that he would quit if he did not get a raise. The foreman offered a five-cent increase which was acceptable to the steward and the operator. Immediately other \$1.25 men demanded raises. The foreman agreed to a raise for one other man only. He explained to the rest that these two men were exceptional workers, that they could handle jobs which were too difficult for the others, and that they, therefore, deserved to earn more. He said that until the others were equally qualified they could not expect increases. The whole group of \$1.25-an-hour men then began to complain about the wage system and about the foreman, and they demanded that the union get raises for the entire group.

The president of the local met with the whole group, and their discussion brought out the fact that there was no plan or system in the department for the training and advancement of operators. The first man who had received a raise was acknowl-

edged to be skilled on certain very difficult jobs, but he had acquired the skill through special opportunity to work on those jobs. Most of the men were kept on simple jobs and never had a chance to develop beyond that level. As a result of protest about this situation, management put in a plan to evaluate each worker carefully, and then gave raises to those who had reached a certain level of skill. A plan was worked out, too, whereby everyone had a chance to work on more skilled jobs and a definite training program was set up. The result was a greater friendliness and more co-operation in the department and an interest in learning better work methods.

While this was going on, however, the department received a great deal of attention both from the union and from management. The steward and others from the department talked about what was going on, too, and bragged about the recognition they were getting. They gave the impression that they were all to receive wage increases and other concessions. Naturally this annoyed others in the plant. Finally a group of equally skilled workers in another department began to criticize their own steward, said that he was not looking out for their interests, accused the union of being run by and for the other department, and threatened to withdraw and sign up with another union. They were finally pacified but they remained critical of the union.

Here we have a situation in which both the foreman and the shop steward tried to make an adjustment for an individual when the real trouble was that there was no adequate plan for training and advancement. They apparently did not realize what lay behind the complaint nor how the group would react to their decision. It was only after the group rebelled that they diagnosed the situation properly and dealt with the real problem. Furthermore, the union failed to interpret the effect these changes would have upon other departments and the possibilities for misunderstandings. If they had examined other departments to see if similar problems existed and taken pains to see that others were given a clear picture of what was going on in the first department, they could have overcome the

feelings of neglect and prevented exaggerated rumors of favors for the first department.

Integrating the Members

The union leader is constantly faced with the problem of integrating all the members into one effective union group which can pull together for the common good. This means that he has to understand the factors which give rise to friction and cleavage and must understand especially the natural lines of cleavage which are apt to form. When, for example, his members include various nationality groups he must be alert to prevent serious splits along those lines; he must avoid any indication that the union "belongs" to any one group. This means that he has to take well-planned steps to see that participation and recognition is extended to all groups, and that no one group or faction is allowed to monopolize the leadership and take over the offices and activities.

Communicating with Management

It is the union leader's job to maintain—and sometimes to establish—co-operative relations between management and the workers. When he himself has been active in an organizing campaign, when he has taken part in arousing the workers' sentiments against management, the problem of restoring co-operative relations between them is especially difficult for him. After the fire and fury of the campaign is over and the fight is won, he must settle down to the prosaic job of making the union work. This requires a shift in attitudes and behavior for the leader, for management, and for the workers, and it is usually a long time before an effective working relationship is established again.

In order to deal with management effectively, it is necessary for the union leader to have some understanding of supervisors' problems. He must realize the pressures under which each level operates, and he must be aware of, and prepared for, supervisors' reactions and resistance to his activities. Since he can short-circuit the entire line, which is especially dis-

turbing to the lower levels of supervision, he has to use his powers cautiously for the sake of co-operation. In dealing with top management he has to recognize their problems as planners and decision-makers and, at the same time, give attention to the effects of their decisions upon the entire organization, especially upon those at the bottom. With all this understanding, he must never lose sight of the fact that he is the workers' representative and that his first duty is to see that workers' interests are considered in management's decisions.

A TOOL FOR MOBILITY

Throughout industry and especially in the intermediate levels of supervision there are people with tremendous ambition and desire to rise in the structure. In almost any advancement there are, of course, some elements of chance, but there are also certain qualities, certain knowledge and skills, which help these ambitious individuals to get ahead. Two of these assets to advancement should be noted as of prime importance. First is the ability and skill necessary to do the immediate job. To get ahead the accountant has to know how to be a good accountant or the engineer a good engineer, each trying to increase his technical knowledge and skills. But in addition, and especially in the very large concerns, the individual has to know how to maintain effective relations with others; he must be able to function well in the system of human relations within the company. Even the most brilliant technician who does not understand the social system, who has frequent difficulties in his relations with others, is not likely to realize the full measure of his ambitions.

Unhappily, many extremely mobile people, especially young executives or highly trained specialists, have a pattern of attitudes and behavior which in itself causes friction and disturbances in their relations with others. Often they are oversensitive about having a subordinate role. They protest against the status system, complain about their superiors, and are especially indignant when their ideas are not given consideration. At the same time they are inclined to grasp at status

symbols and are bothered if subordinates fail to defer to their superior knowledge. Usually this is entirely unconscious behavior; they do not realize that they are doing to their subordinates the same things that they resent in their superiors. On top of this they tend to be very limited in their thinking, totally absorbed in their own jobs and their own points of view, and they usually seem to think that the entire business should revolve around them.

For such a person a knowledge of the human structure of industry can be a very useful tool. He can profit well by studying the system in which he operates just as he studies his special technical field. It is important that he recognize his own place in the system and the problems of his relationships with others. One of the serious weaknesses of many mobile people is that they fail to see *themselves* in the system. They feel that all difficulties are the fault of others, and not their own. They tend to be intolerant of the restraints which the system imposes, too, and see them only as irrational interference with their personal progress. All too often these reactions lead to aggressive behavior, irrational complaints and criticisms of others, feelings of persecution, and all sorts of attitudes and actions which result in friction with others and criticism from superiors. This is certainly not the pattern for success. The mobile person with these tendencies needs an understanding of himself, of his own drives and goals, and of the structure and systems in the factory where he is trying to get his personal satisfaction.

To succeed, the mobile person has to understand, too, the adjustments which he must make with every change in his position in the structure. He must realize what an advancement will mean in terms of new relationships, new patterns of responsibility and authority, new attitudes toward others, and new attitudes of others toward him. Finally, he cannot overlook the fact that his advancement will affect others. To be successful in his advancement he has to know that disturbances will arise and where to look for them; and he has to know how to prevent and counteract antagonisms and friction.

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